2007 Eckhart Tolle Freedom from the World 2007 Retreat Part 1 of 2

[Speaker 2] (0:10 - 1:35)

Om Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Om Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Om Namo Avalokiteshvaraya Welcome to our retreat.

[Speaker 1] (1:35 - 20:59)

You made it. You are here, despite everything. And if you are here, and if you are still here a week from now, that means that you are already undergoing a transformation of consciousness.

I'm saying if you are still here a week from now, because it's possible that one or two people could be here for ego reasons, but they wouldn't be able to stand it, not for a whole week. It would become unbearable. You wouldn't be able to stand the stillness.

And most of all, you wouldn't be able to stand yourself. Because whoever is still under the control of ego is running always somewhere else, is not at ease with who they are, where they are, and what is. Never at ease.

And so they won't be at ease here either. If the pattern inside your head is to be ill at ease, how could you be at ease here? And very quickly you would find reasons to justify to yourself and others your state of not being at ease.

If you're looking for excuses for not being at ease in the now, the only place there is, you can always find them wherever you go. You could say, I didn't come here for bad weather, not knowing that by attaching that label, that thought, you've taken the weather out of the totality. Because within the totality, the so-called bad weather, which isn't bad at all, is inseparable from the beauty that surrounds you here.

It feeds it. But mind takes it out and separates one little fragment and calls it something, unaware that it is part of the totality. And weather is only a tiny example of that.

You take anything that happens to you, any condition that arises, is part of the totality. And when you judge it, call it this or that, and even call it good. Even good weather, why call it anything?

It is as it is. If you call it good, then you must have bad weather, because you can't have good weather without bad weather, because otherwise the word good doesn't make sense anymore. And I'm only taking weather as a small example.

So these are conditions that arise continuously, if you want to use them, if the mind, the egoic mind wants to use them for its own purposes, which is to be right, to make

something or someone wrong, to enhance your sense of self through resisting and complaining. You can always find excuses, reasons, but they are never the true reasons. There's a beautiful lesson in the Course in Miracles that says, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

I am never upset for the reason I think. So that, of course, means to be upset is part of the structure of the egoic mind. You're not in touch with the depth of who you are, the essence of your being.

You're not in touch with the depths of the present moment, which is inseparable from the depths of who you are. And that's why you're upset. And then little things happen, and then that permanent state of being upset comes out.

It's just waiting to say, ah, that's why I'm upset. Now I know why I'm so unhappy. There's a bug in my bed.

So these are... Now I'm not saying the fact that you're already, you're here because you are undergoing the transformation of consciousness does not necessarily mean that you are entirely free, entirely free yet, of those mind structures, egoic structures. Because your ability to be rooted within the depths of being, which is the depths of yourself and the depths of the present moment, inseparable, your ability to be, to dwell within yourself, to rest within your very being, that's the only thing that could redeem you from the state of being upset, unhappy, fearful.

That may still, in some of you, occasionally become obscured by mind waves and by the old structures which still have a certain momentum within you. They are collective human mind structures, been around for a long time. And so you may find yourself occasionally, during this week that we are here together, you may find yourself, or you may already have found yourself in the short time that you have been here, becoming upset with this, that, or the other.

And that's nothing personal. You don't need to feel, oh, he caught me. It's nothing personal.

And it is quite possible that from time to time, you will find yourself entering the state, I'm using that word that is used in the cause of miracles, you're upset one way or another, fearful, anxious, complaining, sad, doubting, emotions and mind waves come and say, this is, I feel that because of this, this is doing this because of that. And then perhaps you remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think. Oh, and then it's a little pointer.

It works like a bell. And so sometimes the bell that I occasionally use is a spiritual alarm clock. It says, step out of your state of being identified with thinking and emotions.

Step out and be present and see your thoughts and emotions. That's the spiritual alarm

clock, because awakening means to awaken out of the old mental emotional patterns. And so a bell can fulfill that function.

That's why in some monasteries, they use it quite a lot. Or a stick that the master in a Zen monastery uses to hit you, that can work too. Or a little pointer like, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

And then you suddenly, that wakes you, awakens you out of your identification with the reaction, the mental emotional reaction that was ego, that was me. And then you see it. And then you see the situation isn't really that important.

And you see, the real reason why you're upset is you've lost touch with yourself. Or another way of putting it, you've lost touch with the present moment. You're not fully aligned internally with what is now.

So, and not being aligned internally with whatever form this moment takes, means not being in touch with life. Because at this moment, life is taking this form. It's not going to last.

Forms never last. But at this moment, life is taking this form. To be aligned with a deeper life that is beyond form, you need to be first of all aligned with the form that life takes, instead of rejecting the form and saying, I'm looking for the real life, but not this.

So that's a little secret. And that's something to be particularly practiced, to be aware of here, to be aligned, to be in touch with being who you are, or what you are, beyond the conditioned entity, conditioned by the past, mentally-emotional conditioning, a bundle of mentally-emotional conditioning. That's, to most people, that's who they think they are.

They speak out of that. They react out of that. They interact, and so on, and are upset a lot of the time out of that.

So to be aligned with who you are beyond that, the unconditioned, the being that you are, that which is so hard to put into words, because words come from this world of forms, and we are now pointing towards the formless dimension in yourself. Not the form, not the physical form, and certainly not the psychological form of me. It's a temporary formation.

Nothing wrong with it. It's a temporary formation, like a cloud, or a snowflake. No human is the same on the planet.

And they say, when they look at snowflakes through the microscope, not one snowflake is the same as any other snowflake. And yet, it only survives for a short time. So to be aligned with who you are, and that's the only thing that can free you from the state of being unhappy, which is structural, not caused ultimately by conditions, because I have met people in the worst of conditions, physical or otherwise, who were absolutely at

peace inside.

So it's not that. Life. Jesus said, I want you to have life, and I want you to have it more abundantly.

True, abundant life, which is not to do with quantities, forms of life, but life itself. To be in touch with the life that you are, which is one with the life that is at the heart of the universe. You could also call it God, if the word had not been misused so much.

To enter life, you have to first of all enter, and life by life we mean here, not a form of life, but the formless, timeless one life, of which you are a temporary expression. To know that, that is the purpose of your being here, that is the purpose of the universe, it wants to know itself through you. To know that one life that you are, a condition for that is not being at odds with the forms of life, the form that life takes at this moment, because that's the only place where life can take form.

So to bring an inner alignment to whatever condition arises at this moment, either an external condition or internal condition. Oh, this is how it is. Doesn't mean you can't take action.

If you're in bed, cold, your pajama isn't slick enough, you thought you were coming to a warmer climate. Well, if you arrived, by the way, if you arrived this evening, you'll be surprised how hot it is tomorrow morning. That's how it seems to go every day.

Of course, you can ask for a blanket. You can say, okay, I need to accept this moment, I'm not going to ask for a blanket. If there's something you can change, let's you take a step, but the action that you take already arises out of an inner alignment, not out of being upset, because if you run to the reception or wherever you go and you're already upset because the egoic entity used the fact that you were not warm enough in your bed or in your tent, used that as some another justification for being upset, just its normal condition came up again and said, this is why. Of course, it's not. It's only a blanket, or it's only a little cold.

And then you go, and then they will either tell you, yes, here it is, or they tell you, no, we've run out of blankets. There are too many people here. We don't have that many blankets.

And then you go, ah. Now, you can see the egoic entity would have another reason for being even more upset. And in that strengthens its sense of self, which is a total illusion.

Its illusory sense of me gets strengthened through the upset. And then it runs and you talk to your next one, you know what? They don't even have enough blankets.

And then perhaps at that moment, if you remember, I'm never upset for the reason I think. And of course, I'm never upset for the reason I think means I'm upset because I've

lost the present moment. I'm not aligned with the form that this moment takes.

That's all. If I were aligned internally, if I said, that's how it is, I've taken action that didn't work, and then I can ask somebody else about some blankets, or find some other means of covering myself, or I find nothing and I'm simply shiver in bed. And that is not that bad either.

If you lived in a Zen monastery, you would shiver for years.

[Speaker 2] (21:03 - 21:09)

And they can't complain.

[Speaker 1] (21:09 - 1:08:59)

Well, they can not only in the head, but they can't go to the master and complain. You idiot, go out! And he's not insulting, he's hoping to break your mind identification.

Sometimes it works, but most of the time it doesn't. So you work with whatever arises. That's the raw material for our retreat.

Whatever condition arises, external or internal. And so, if you couldn't find the place to just to stay for one moment with that situation, you then spend a night feeling a little cold. And then that's a good opportunity for not mentally labeling it, and not even saying, I'm cold.

That makes it far worse. And you are feeling upset, and in that you feel good. The ego feels good about that.

The strange thing is that the ego, what is bad for the organism, being upset, the body doesn't like it, it interferes with the flow of energy through the body. But to the ego, it's great to be upset. The more upset, the stronger I feel.

And so, whatever condition arises is as it is at this moment. Nobody could argue with that, except the ego. Whatever arises at this moment is as it is.

And if you can recognize that fact, suddenly life becomes very simple. Because it's the simplicity of the present moment, which you can always deal with. It's always really quite simple.

Either you take action, or you let it be. If action is necessary or possible, action happens. But it doesn't arise anymore out of the ego, which really is looking to enhance itself through the action, to make itself right and somebody else wrong.

If action is possible or necessary, it happens. If no action is possible, there's a simple, beautiful acceptance of this moment as it is. And that is the inner alignment with this

moment.

So confusion leaves you, because confusion is to do with being out of the moment and trying to work something out about your past and your future and how they two hang together. How can I make it work, my life story? And I've got, okay, then you're like, I may have 20 years left and I've got to make it work.

And you neglect the primary where life is found, the present moment. So people are trying to make their life work or find their life purpose in terms of future. Where is my life purpose?

And then automatically you look to the future for your life purpose. That is your secondary life purpose. The future is your life purpose to do with this temporary form, whatever function this form fulfills.

And yes, that also exists. It has its dimension also. But primary is the purpose of, it is your purpose to be internally one with life.

And that can only be found in the present moment. And if you miss that because you're looking for some greater purpose than this, you've missed the primary, the very foundation of your life, this moment, and looking for some greater life in some future moment, which doesn't exist except as a thought. So we are here to go deeper into this.

It is the depth. It's to do with depth. That's why we may briefly touch upon what you do externally with your life.

Of course, that's, that also, that is a dimension that is a temporary one, you as form. But nothing, it is nothing compared to the importance of being one with who you are in the depths of your being. What purpose could you possibly find if you're not one, if you're looking to the future to find that state of being one with who you are?

Who you are, not who you will be. One with being, life, God, the now is the portal. But you, the formless dimension, but you cannot reach the formless dimension.

I'm saying it again. I will repeat it many times. You cannot be aligned with the formless eternal life that you are as long as you reject or resist or are at odds with the form that life takes at this moment.

Then the form that life takes as your life situation or as a condition that arises becomes a wall, a big obstacle. You have made it into it. It isn't.

But you would, you have, you make then whatever situation or condition arises in your life and you look upon it as an obstacle. Like, oh no, this is not what I want. Oh no, oh no.

Something, oh no, not this again. That's not supposed to happen. That shouldn't happen.

He shouldn't do that. They shouldn't. I shouldn't.

Oh no. And so you create, it's that which separates you. You're looking, there are people who are looking for spiritual enlightenment away from what is here.

They're in some, and that's, these are people who love abstract, some abstract mental constructs about what enlightenment is. And they study it for years. And then you get divisions.

You can divide in 15 this and 25 that and 100 this and oh. So the form that is the condition, the form of this moment, that this moment takes, if you're internally aligned, it becomes an opening. The worse it is, the wider the opening really.

So you, we work with that, this, these days that we are here, bringing particular alertness, particular attention to whatever arises outside or inside. Notice your reactions. See if you can be in a state of immediate oneness with the form that life takes at this moment, immediate inner oneness.

Whenever you are in immediate inner oneness, you're already a master, spiritual master. Maybe only for that minute. Maybe the next minute you're no longer at one, but that's fine.

You don't need to be a master for the rest of your life. It's enough to be master of the present moment because that's all there is. Otherwise the mind comes in and says, but yeah, but I'm not going to able to sustain this for the So the mastery of life doesn't mean that you exert, exert total control over everything and everybody.

Mastery means to be one with the totality, the total, the cosmos, the Tao, the flow of the universe. It's all, it's all one. It's all interconnected.

The web of, the web of the one world, universe, reality. To be one with that, that's being a master. One, so master is master of the present moment.

That's all. And suddenly life becomes, is very simple. The present moment is primary in your life at any moment.

And whenever you forget that, you become upset. And so you're not upset for the reason you think you're upset because you forgot what really matters. That's all.

And so it's interesting to see how many times this week you forget what really matters. Forget yourself, forget being, forget the present moment. And the moment you realize that you forgot the present moment, you forgot what really matters.

The moment you realize that, you haven't forgotten. It's only when you don't know it, then you've truly forgotten it. Because then you're immersed in the reaction, in the old mental emotional pattern.

That means you've truly forgotten. That means you're truly asleep. Spiritually speaking, you're asleep.

And then you need a stronger dose, perhaps, of a stronger alarm clock. But here, of course, there are probably many because we meet here quite often. And it'll be hard to stay asleep here.

If you're deadlocked and your door's off, that's another matter. Externally, what you do here, there is more freedom on this retreat than on some other retreats that you may have attended. If you have been on other retreats, not our retreats, but some other, there's some retreats, meditation retreats that are like boot camps, where you have to, you have to, you sit for 10 hours a day, and you meditate, and you walk, and you can't even look at anybody.

And I'm not saying that's bad. That could be great too. It's just, this is different.

Forms are different, that's all. That could take you into being too. And here, the form is somewhat different.

And to some extent, it is up to you whether, on the external level, you want to have a retreat and refrain from speaking, in which case, whenever anybody approaches you, you could go. And then they know that you want to be on a silent retreat. I would also like to, at some point for probably two or three days, we will endeavor to be silent together for a whole day or two days, whatever it may be.

But in addition to that, you may want to, those who want it, can be silent all the time. There's some silent tables set aside in the restaurant. Or you can reduce your amount of verbal exchange to a minimum and not engage in a lot of chit-chat.

But that's up to you. I'm not saying you should. Or you can engage in normal chit-chat and still be present and observe the chit-chat coming out of your mouth.

There it goes. If you are one of those people who want to continue to chit-chat, that's fine. But something that will help you observe the chit-chatting entity, it helps to be, while you chit-chat or listen to somebody else chit-chatting, to be in your body, to feel the inner, the aliveness in your body while you sit there and chit-chat.

That's not immediately easy, because what tends to happen is the stream of chit-chatting draws all your attention in, and the old stories come out. And you can actually see how they pull you along. They pull your consciousness.

Your consciousness is pulled into these words, and the words go one string of strings of words, like coming out of you like some long string. And there's no end. It's like a magician.

And as that happens, can you be in the body, or at least can you feel your hands, the aliveness in your hands while you talk? You are not really talking. It's the mind is talking.

Can you feel the aliveness in your hands? Or when you listen to the other person chit-chatting, can you feel the energy in your body? And while you listen, can you at least listen to the other person without engaging in preparatory chit-chat?

What are you going to say next? Or some clever remark that's waiting on the tip of your tongue. So to be in the body, and that's useful also for those who decide to have more of a monastic retreat and refrain from speaking altogether, because that doesn't help you.

If that thing up here is continuously busy, and perhaps even more busy than it would be if you were talking to people normally, because it gets so frustrated not being able to talk. And then it talks even more in the head. And so being in the body is important, no matter whether you're having a social retreat or a monastic retreat.

It being rooted here means some of the attention goes away from... The mind hasn't got all that much attention anymore. The attention is in the body.

And it's beautiful to rest, to have attention in here while you do things, especially while you listen to others. Or if you are having a silent retreat and you're sitting at a silent table, you can hear other people talking. And can you be the silent listener while others are talking?

Or is somebody else talking in you and saying, look at these people, they're supposed to be on a spiritual retreat and they're talking, not me. Ego can use all kinds of disguises and forms. And when you think you got rid of ego in one form, it appears in another.

So it's essential to watch, be there, watch, be alert. So it's up to you then what kind of a retreat you want to have. But these we meet here, that's a given.

Observe doubts that come into your mind, because mind is doubt. If it's not doubt, it's some kind of obsession or so-called conviction. It's probably worse than doubt.

This absolute conviction that this is how it is. And I've had it for 20 years and this is how it is. Or it goes, well, what if, but on the other hand, I shouldn't have come here, should I?

Yes, no. Oh, that reminds me of the presidential come. There were these two who seemed to embody, they say one was going from one to the other and the other has an absolute conviction.

Two forms of mind that the mind can take. So doubt may come in that you, perhaps you shouldn't have come here. Often people tell me that on the second or third day, they start thinking of leaving.

The mind gets suddenly very active and says, nothing is happening here. And the same people often tell me that they haven't left. But then they tell me towards the end of the retreat, the mind comes in and absolutely says, I don't want to leave here.

So you can observe that also. So that's a wonderful thing to be there as the observer of your mind, what it does, what it says, its reactions, because you're also observing the ego. Ego is no more than mind, mental, emotional forms that you have identified with that carry a sense of self.

That's all. Being in the body. I recommend it tonight.

When you go to bed. If you're traveling with a friend or partner. When once you lie down, at least then stop talking.

And going to sleep lying flat on your back first, and enter the inner energy field of your body. And of course, you will still listen and you will listen much more acutely to the noises, the night insects, the beautiful sounds. And you will be able to listen to all that.

Because as you enter the body, the mind, the mental noise will gradually calm down, or dissolve completely. And only then can you truly listen. We'll be talking about that.

So you lie on your back, hands either on your legs or by your side, and you lie in the energy field of your body. And so the compulsive thinking subsides, the thinking entity subsides, and there's simply spacious aliveness. And go to sleep from there.

Don't go to sleep from mental noise. You're lucky here that there's no television, so you can't watch the latest talk show or whatever it is. There's no magazines, at least I haven't seen any.

If you brought them, put them away. Newspapers, put them away. Because these are addictive things to the mind, which is always searching for more, more stimulus, more of this to get its teeth into.

And so you may find, not only tonight, but also in the next few days, certain symptoms of withdrawal symptoms. Because the mind is addictive. The mind, everybody's mind is an addict.

And so even if you're not addicted to drugs, it's still an addict. And if you can't sing, even if you don't watch TV and read papers or ever, the mind is still addicted. And its main addiction is thinking.

God, to think. But there's nothing to think about. You're in bed in this beautiful place.

What is there to think about? What could you add to this moment by thinking about some other moment? You can only obscure the moment by thinking about something else.

So this is another aspect. We won't go into this this evening. It's transcending having to think.

And if that is, if you achieve nothing else in your incarnation here, your life is fulfilled. Consciousness has flowered. No matter whether the world tells you that you are important or not, consciousness has flowered.

And if you wake up in the middle of the night, and soon after you wake up, usually the mind starts saying something. It will be about past or future or complaining or whatever. And then simply go back into the body, go into the body.

Use it. Don't say, oh, I should be asleep. No, you're not asleep.

Or say, I can't sleep. I'm going to be tired. I'm going to fall asleep tomorrow in the session.

We don't know what you're going to fall asleep. You're not asleep. No, that's all you know.

And that is what you are internally aligned with. I'm not asleep. Okay.

And then you go into the body. And it's beautiful not being asleep in the body. You're in the body then.

And then not being asleep is not a problem. In fact, it's very enjoyable. And say, oh, this is good.

Little fragments of thoughts may come in. This is good. Feels good.

Alive. And then you listen. Subtle noises.

Beautiful. And you feel an intense aliveness. And then perhaps at some point, you will go back to sleep.

And in the morning, fortunately, there's no radio here to switch on. Can't listen to the news. Don't know what's going on.

It's always the same anyway. I listen to it too. But I know it's always the same.

Just not in the morning, though. Like the first, keep that freshness of the first. As you wake up, that freshness.

Keep it fresh. And instead of going immediately into thinking, go back into the body before you get up. Just five or ten minutes.

And then you get up. That's a good start. It was a good end to the day.

And it's a good start to the next day. So that you don't go into sleep from thought. And you do not go from sleep immediately into thought.

You have a space. And then remember the next, when you interact with people, be in the body as much as you can while you interact. So that you feel.

And if you can't be in the body, feel just the hands. Be there in here while you listen. If you can't feel the whole body.

So that is important, no matter whether you're quiet or whether you talk on the retreat. We'll address this again when we have our silent days. Something else that you may want to do.

There's one sense that's a little bit neglected. The primary senses for human beings are visual and auditory. Smelling.

At different times of the day, the air smells different here. And so you can take, also as you get up, you put your head out of the window or the door. Or you walk out of here.

Or you walk out of the restaurant. Always take, smell the air and see the fragrance. Smell that.

Always subtly different. But there's more here than the smell. Notice that in the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought.

Because if you were thinking, you couldn't smell it. In the moment of smelling the air, there's no thought and there's an intense sense of aliveness. Then afterwards, after that smell, perhaps thought comes in.

And then you notice that. But a great thing is if you can notice, and that perhaps you've been doing for years. Perhaps if you're not totally identified with the mental noise, you have occasionally, when you're out in nature, you've taken a deep breath and said, this is good.

But you didn't say this is good while you were smelling. You came afterwards. While you are conscious of that, there's no thought.

And there's more to it than that. But I'll leave it at that right now. So use that.

Senses will become very important this week as we practice presence. Senses will become sharpened as more awareness flows into all the senses. We'll address that tomorrow.

But we already have enough for tonight and the night and tomorrow morning. Remember the slightest upset for whatever reason. I'm never upset for the reason I think.

I lost the present moment. I lost the internal alignment with the present moment. And at that moment of realization, the possibility of being aligned with the present moment is there.

It is your decision or your choice. Do I want to continue being out of alignment and feel upset? And then perhaps the ego says, oh yeah, I'd love to feel even more upset.

No, you see, that's a funny question. Because when you make it conscious, you can see that it's insane. And so the pattern will collapse when you make it conscious.

And if you ask yourself, is this what I want? Do I want to continue to be upset about this? Or does this, am I enjoying feeling upset about this?

Or is it possible to, now that I've realized I'm out of alignment, I can choose to say yes to what is and be in alignment with what is. It's your choice then. Choice comes in at that moment.

The universe chooses through you to be conscious. And if your mind said, oh, I'd love to carry on being upset, you would start laughing. It doesn't work anymore.

Because you've made it conscious. No matter how hard you try, you can't be upset anymore. That's no fun anymore, says the ego.

Life just isn't fun anymore. Notice your left leg is moving. That's an emotion.

Be aware of it. I'm not saying stop it. Just watch it.

And you're not the only one. I always see people whose leg or arm moves slightly. It is an emotion in the body.

All you need to do is be conscious of it. And suddenly it'll stop. It's something that is, you're not fully in here yet.

There's something. Be conscious. Watch it.

And then it stops by itself. If your attention is in here, it stops. If your attention is in here, the body goes, get in here.

Be in here. Your consciousness has to go in here. And that's, then the body becomes a portal.

You go, and eventually you transcend body. But you go, first you go in here. It's essential to leave that, to get out of that while you're here.

Not to become unconscious, but to transcend that, the thinker. And then there's not only the thinker, there's the emotional field that accompanies the thinker. That's been there for years.

There's the pain body that's been there, not just your pain body, humanity's pain body that's been there for years. So there's the thinker in alliance with the pain body. They together form the ego.

The emotional field, old emotion, and that. And that feeds that. And the emotion feeds the thinker.

And the thinker feeds the emotion. So consciousness, and watch if there's a movement in here, simply watch that. Internally, not externally.

Internally. Feel it. Now one more thing.

There is something in perhaps everyone, and that is the emotional, mental emotional entity, that is simply a form that consciousness has taken, that you confuse with who you are. And that egoic entity does not want to be here. It may occasionally arise as you sit here and manifest either as intense thought movement in the head, you're not listening to a word anymore that's being said here.

Intense thought movement, whatever it is, I don't know what about, could be anything, past, future, dreamland, anything, fantasy, or what your problems, or your life, or what somebody did to you, or you're going to do to them, or what you should have said and didn't say, whatever. It can, as you sit here, there can be a reaction. It can be very intense in the head, or, and, or, in the body as an emotion, so much so that you just can't stand it being here anymore.

And then sometimes I can see people, they start looking around when it happens, and they, some look for the door. And again, just when it happens, you can watch that. I may, without offending, wanting to offend you, if I occasionally see somebody who is engaged in it, I might point it out.

So there's nothing personal about thoughts or emotions. Oh, well, that takes a lot of steam out of my story. And if you cannot stand it here, if the impulse comes to leave, to go home, I'll just recommend one thing.

Do not immediately obey the impulse, but watch the impulse to go, wanting to go home. Allow it to be there, watch it. You may watch it, and it may subside, and an hour later you may find you love it.

Or it may well be that the impulse comes continuously, or doesn't go away, and then you may find yourself, you have no choice, you have to, you do, you cannot stop yourself, you have to go, then you, if you have to go, it is not wrong to leave here. You are not wrong if you leave here. It just means consciousness will arise in some other way in you, or through you, somewhere else, in another situation, perhaps while you're traveling home, or when you arrive home, or 50 years later when you're near deathbed.

We don't know. It is not wrong. Although when you, those who do leave, the egoic mind will attempt to make everybody else wrong.

That's normal. And that's not personal either. And when it happens, you can watch that in yourself.

All these people, I'm not going to stay here. Okay, they're all wrong, and I'm right. Yes, that's how it is.

It's okay. Spiritual alarm clock, but much nicer than any alarm clock. Quite a few people apparently arrived after the moral meeting last night.

And for those who did, let me summarize what we said last night. Your only job here is to be present.

[Speaker 2] (1:09:03 - 1:09:03)

That's it.

[Speaker 1] (1:09:18 - 3:26:24)

To be present is a reversal of the normal way in which people live. Normal means unconscious, normal means insane, dysfunctional, and so on, of course. So we don't want to be normal.

The result of normal you see when you watch the news on television. That's normal. The arising of presence goes beyond the personal realm.

It seems to happen to a person. But at the same time, it's only happening because the personal dimension is becoming relatively unimportant. It's still there, remains there, but it becomes far less significant than it has been before.

Your whole personal sense of me, of selfhood, of story, my story, any kind of my mind, my history, my story, my future, my purpose, my... The normal way is that the present moment is on the periphery of your consciousness because you've got better things to be worried about. So the attention is normally mainly on past or future.

Probably more future for most people than past, except very old people when it shifts to past. And so they talk about the past all the time because they haven't got much future left to think about. Not knowing that old age is an incredible opportunity for entering the timeless dimension that is presence when you haven't got much future left.

So this is our training ground for living in a different state of consciousness where your primary attention is always on the present moment. Peripherally, you're still aware, of course, of your life situation, which has a past and probably a future unless something happens. You never know.

Nobody knows. So that your consciousness is not completely absorbed any longer by your life situation. Every life situation is to some extent problematic.

But there's nothing problematic about the present moment. That's the amazing thing. And every life situation is just greater or lesser extent complicated.

But there's nothing complicated ever about the present moment. So instead of deriving your sense of self from your life situation, derive your sense of self from the present moment. The depths of the present moment, which is the depths of who you are, which is not what happens, but it's underneath what happens.

But only when you are aligned with what happens, can you get to that which lies deeper than what happens, which is the form that life takes at this moment. You can never get to the formless dimension as long as you reject the form internally. In another teaching, this has been expressed by somebody.

I don't know who, I can't remember. Somebody asked, how can I become free of the world? And that teacher said, when you love the world and everything in it.

And to be aligned with the present moment is really no more than that. It's to not to accept what is this, the form, and that openness towards the form that arises is really love. This allowing, and that's our practice here.

Probably only little things will arise on a retreat, a relatively protected setting. Although occasionally it happens that some people go through enormous drama, even on a retreat. The shift in consciousness happens when the present moment becomes primary.

That's all. You realize how important, how much incredibly more important this is compared to your life situation. And to live rightly or to get your life right is totally pointless, even to make plans.

There's nothing wrong with making plans, but if it's like building, constructing a building, there's nothing wrong. If you make plans without, you think, okay, I have to get my life right and order, and you're making plans and all is all mapped out. That's where I want to get, and this is how I'm going to get there.

And if you forget what is primary, the present moment, it's like building a big building without the foundation or crumbling foundation, because your relationship with the present moment isn't right. You're hoping that when you achieve all the things that you have planned, then your relationship with life will suddenly fall into place, and you would totally fit into life, and life will be working for you. But if you carry inside the mind structure of non-alignment with the present moment, then no matter what you achieve, that which you want to achieve through whatever you achieve, you're never going to get.

So we're not saying don't make plans, but this is about the very foundation. To get your life right is getting this moment right. Your relationship to this moment, and that's not the ultimate truth because if you go even deeper, you realize you, who you are in your essence, and what we call the present moment beyond the form that this moment takes, is there one.

But let's for just for a moment use that approach and talk about your relationship to the present moment. No, this is not the ultimate truth, but it's an approximation towards the truth. If your relationship to the present moment is not right, nothing can ever be right in the future, because when the future comes, it's the present moment.

And your habit, your mental emotional habit, is to have a dysfunctional relationship with it when it comes. And so when it comes, it's never quite right, and it's never enough. There's always something missing.

And for a little while, there's an elation when some new form arises that satisfies you for a moment, takes away the needing and wanting. And you get a little bit of glimpse of the fullness of being, not because the $10 million suddenly arrived in your bank account, but because for a moment, the $10 million removed the wanting, the next thing. For a moment, the $10 million removed the mental emotional wanting and grasping to where's the next thing, the more that I need to fulfill myself.

For a moment, the $10 million arrives and the wanting seems to be satisfied. For a moment, it subsides. And because of that, the joy that you feel is not because of the $10 million that arrived in your bank account, but because for one moment, the incessant wanting future subsided, and then the joy of being came through.

And you confuse that and believe it's caused by the $10 million. And that can happen with big things or little things that they give you suddenly enormous satisfaction. But what you really feel is that for a moment, the wanting has died down.

And when that mind structure, which is the future, looking to the future to find for then being the aliveness, the essence of who you are, the joy of being comes through. But never for long, and then it reasserts itself and there's renewed wanting. And then you get the sense that there's something missing even with the $10 million in your bank account.

And the same dysfunctional relationship with the present moment arises again, except that before, you were living in a trailer, and you had a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. And when the $10 million arrived, you live in a mansion. And there you have a dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

Ultimately, it doesn't make much difference where you are unhappy. You might say, I'd rather be unhappy in luxury than in poverty, but it really makes little difference.

Recognizing what is primary and getting, observing your relationship with the present moment.

And this is a training ground while we are here. We bring attention to that, what, and we ask, and again, that's a little pointer. We had one last night from the Course in Miracles.

I'm never upset for the reason I think that's true. And I pointed out why you're upset, because you're not in touch with the life that you are, the depths of your being. And anything out there can upset you, but it's not that, it's that.

You're not in touch with the present moment. Another pointer now, ask yourself as often as possible, what is my relationship with this moment, the present moment? And observe the witness, the relationship with the present moment.

And you may observe that it is not a friendly one. And that's enough to know that, because that's an unconscious habit. To have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment is an unconscious habit.

The moment you make an unconscious habit conscious, it begins to dissolve. So the simple recognition that my relationship with this moment is unfriendly, or even hostile, or I'm running away from it. I want to be somewhere else.

I resist this. Interesting. Don't fall into the trap of self-condemnation, because if you condemn yourself for not being in a good relationship with the present moment, you have added a further dysfunctional relationship with the present moment.

You see, I'm no good. I can't do it. I've done it again.

You see all the internal dialogue. Sometimes you talk to yourself as you, you address yourself as you. That's what the mind does.

You see, you can't do it. There's no point. You're just not good enough.

Or you say, that teaching doesn't work. I have to try some other teaching. It obviously isn't working for me.

And that's just a thought. Don't believe any thought that comes into your head. Just watch.

And this is particularly important on this retreat. Thoughts that come into your head are just thoughts, no more. Don't give them an importance that they do not have.

You can allow them, it's there. But don't completely believe in every thought that comes into your head. So examining your relationship with the present moment as often as possible.

And that's not an analysis. You don't need to analyze. You simply watch, mental and emotional.

Am I judging this moment mentally? Am I calling it not good enough? Am I running away from it?

Am I projecting myself elsewhere? Am I resisting it emotionally? And that's enough to see it.

The moment you see it, the unconscious pattern begins to dissolve. But in addition, that's the, that happens by itself. But in addition, you can actually choose to be fully present.

The moment you realize you're not present, you don't have a friendly relationship with the present moment. And that moment, you can also choose to be present. You can choose, or you can choose, as we said last night, you can also choose that you want to continue to have an unfriendly relationship with the present moment.

I'd like to continue to be unhappy. That's a choice too. But it's unlikely that you would, if it makes conscious, that's an unconscious egoic choice.

Yes. The choice to be unhappy, humans make that all the time. But they're not conscious of it.

But consciously, it would even be absurd if you even said to yourself, I love that, this unhappiness. I really enjoy this. The moment you said that, you're making it conscious, and you would start laughing.

It just doesn't work. A dysfunctional pattern, when you make it conscious, can't work anymore. It doesn't work anyway, because it's dysfunctional.

So to be able to observe your relationship with the present moment, of course, requires some presence. Very unconscious people simply react unconsciously, and they don't have that choice. They cannot observe their relationship with the present moment.

And this is not something that you can bring about. Precondition for being able to observe your relationship with the present moment, is that there is enough presence in you from where you can observe your relationship with the present moment. And this is not something that you can make happen.

This is the grace. By grace, there is enough presence in you, so that you can be conscious of your relationship with the present moment, and of the present moment itself. You can be conscious of the thoughts you have.

You can be conscious of the emotions that go through you. Very unconscious people, they are their thoughts. They are their emotions.

They're completely in the grip of their thoughts and emotions. There's nothing you can do. To tell them, observe your thoughts and emotions, or be conscious of your relationship with the present moment, is pointless.

They don't even know what you're talking about. So that is not something that is up to you to choose. By grace, presence is arising through this form.

And because presence is arising through this form, you are able to say, I choose to be present. And that is good. Now you can say, I choose to be present, because there is enough presence in you to do that.

So really, what speaks in you, what chooses, is presence itself. Presence is arising, and it looks as if a person were choosing to be present. And this is because you are going beyond the personal realm, beyond that you transcend the limitations of being no more than a little person with a little past and a little future.

And that's why we are here, to see that it is possible to live much more beautifully, much more effectively and joyously in that way. So your primary attention, while we are here, this is a protected setting. It's a training ground.

It's a greenhouse or hot house for consciousness. But it's not as much as a hot house as some retreats. Some retreats are so structured, and you have to meditate 10 hours a day, and you don't speak at all, although we will have periods of not speaking, that they become a real hot house.

And the consciousness can develop very quickly in an extremely structured and protected setting. And then you become very present after 10 days, a week, and everybody goes, it's beautiful. And then the retreat comes to an end.

And then they go out, and the first they go back into the traffic, they go back into the city, they go back into their normal life, and they feel it's all... And the hot house plant isn't used to normal conditions. The moment you take the hot house plant out of the hot house, and it stays for two or three days, and then...

So here we have a, in some way, normal life, but also something else arising. We continue to interact to some extent, but not as much as in so-called ordinary life. So we bring consciousness into the ordinary, into relating.

Now, this is very important, the choice to be present. You are able to make that choice. And ultimately, but this doesn't matter, it's a philosophical question, it is not you as the person who chooses presence, because you as the person would never choose presence.

Because the person is the old conditioning, is the ego. You as the person don't want to be present. So when you choose presence, it is not the person that chooses, it is the deeper dimension of the, that which is beyond the conditioned, that chooses to be

present.

And occasionally, you may find the obstruction of the person coming back in. It doesn't say, I don't want to be present, it says something else to distract you, to pretend that something else is more important than being present. The person is also the conditioned thought patterns is part of the person.

The whole, all the conditioned thought patterns in the head are part of the person, the me. And identification and the thought patterns are clever. They will come up with some thought that draws you out of presence and that it doesn't say this is more important than presence, it implies that this is more important than presence.

And I need to think about this, this thought is... And off you go. So you may observe that also, the person reasserting itself, which is the old pattern, the old thought, and you disappear.

You disappear into the conditioned. Consciousness goes back to sleep. Consciousness identifies with form, thought forms, emotional forms.

Consciousness identifies with forms and continues to dream the dream of form, and which is the dream of that you are no more than a person. And then everything, everything that is in form in your life has an enormous importance in that dream because you know nothing beyond the dream. So everything that happens in your life is so terribly important.

Everything is... That's why you get upset so much. And things happen continuously in the dream to upset you more.

Consciousness dreaming the dream of form, one of the ways in which that manifests is as a person. And if consciousness were not ready to awaken, nobody would be awakening. It is only because consciousness is ready to awaken out of that dream that we are sitting here.

And for many people, it is not until the dream becomes very unpleasant that they begin to awaken. It's only when the dream gets, oh, you just can't stand it anymore, and then that suffering, that pain wakes you up and suddenly you become present. Some people are forced into presence.

Many of you were forced into presence because you couldn't stand the dream anymore, the dream of past and future, the dream of me and my story. And that's why you're here. So choosing, you choose to be present.

And you may have to choose that many times, particularly when you notice the dysfunctional relationship with the present moment. Now, what happens the moment you say, I choose presence? That's just a thought.

That's not yet presence. It's a pointer. I choose presence is not presence.

Otherwise, and that's the... Traditionally, the mistake of religion is to confuse the pointer with that which it points to. And so if that ever happens, you'll know that this has happened when we start having prayers about presence.

We choose presence. Or even worse, we believe in presence. And if you don't, then you're wrong, or worse.

Now, what happens? I choose presence to be present. You enter the present moment.

What happens as you enter the present moment? When you observe another person going through the shift from dreamland, which is being identified with thinking and emotions and their problems and their future, and suddenly something wakes them up into presence, and you observe, you can see both the difference in their face and in their eyes, and also the energy emanation that changes, and it goes like this, or or into, suddenly you wake up out of the dream of thought. And for some people, it happens that the first thing they notice when they become present is their surroundings.

As if they had just arrived. And then they may notice certain noises that were there. One man reported, I read about it, became present at home for the first time.

He had lived there for several years, and he heard distant but clearly audible church bells. It was somewhere in Europe. He had never heard the church bells before, because he was too much, his consciousness was too much absorbed by thought.

For the first time in years, he heard church bells ringing and was amazed. And you may see colors, you may see light, you become aware of the space in the room. And the next thing often that happens is you sense more the energy field, the entire energy field in the body.

That is Picatto, because it's presence within and presence without. And you feel there's an aliveness in the body, whereas before you didn't, the body wasn't really, even if you did physical exercises, still you were not in the body. You were still, even while you're on the treadmill in the gym, you're either thinking about your problems, or you're watching a TV screen.

That's what people do. It's quite draining, because you're, you know, the attention goes out there. So even people who say they're looking after their bodies are not necessarily in the body.

It can be still in here. And so most people live in the upper compartment, or the, in the loft or the attic. And there's the entire building inhabited by weird, by weird people.

All kinds of emotions live in there and go, ooh. And anybody can come in, because you're

not there. You're only, everybody, they all know that you're only up there.

And then the emotions, they make a lot of noise, and then they take over the thinker. And the thinker doesn't know what's happening. So presence means first, usually, ah, you become present without and within.

There is an alertness that is suddenly there. And thought is not important, is no longer primary when presence arises. Another word for presence, of course, is stillness.

Because whenever you are present, the movement of thought subsides. Occasional thoughts can still come in, but there are space, suddenly there is space. There is suddenly the space of no thought.

But I'm reluctant to call that a relaxed state. In a way, it is a relaxed state, but it is not to be confused with what is normally called relaxation. In the mind-identified unconscious state, there's the, it has relaxation.

When you go, you're hanging out. And that's good, at least for a while you're free of the torture of the mind. And then there is the high energy state, which in the egoic state is stress.

Use some kind of, let's get it, let's get something done. Okay, we've got so much to do. Come on, let's get on with it.

That's the high energy state. And then occasionally they lapse into the so-called relaxed state, perhaps only after a few drinks, or then they just, let's hang out. Or veg out is the expression in front of the TV.

Vegging out in front of the TV. And with the TV, the nice thing is that you don't have to think your own thoughts anymore. The thoughts, and that's a, it's a small liberation from yourself, but you're, unfortunately, you link into all the stuff that you see in there.

You think their thoughts, whatever thoughts they want you to think. You switch on into that, you link into that, and then you don't have your own problems. You just live their problems.

But at least it frees you from your own for a little while. But that's not a liberation, really. It's just a shift from one mind form to another mind form.

But for some people, that's like, they relax a little bit then in front of it. And if you have a can of beer, it's even better. And then the next morning, you go back into the high energy state.

And with the briefcase or whatever it is, phone calls. Is there something that is neither this nor that? Yes, and that's the state of presence.

I'm reluctant to call it relaxed because of what I've just described. What is normally called relaxed is losing consciousness, drifting towards sleep. And what is usually called high energy in the mind state is quite a stressful state.

And it's not the body doesn't like it, but the ego says, I've got to be responsible. I've got to be stressed to be responsible. If I'm not worried, I'm not responsible about my life.

And as the man called, the boss calls the employee into the office, into his office and says, I've told this joke before, looks at him grimly and says, the boss says to the employee, you are the only person in this company not suffering from a stress related disease. How come? So that's, there is another way to live.

That is neither the state where you hang out all the time, nor the state of high, so-called high energy that is stressful and ultimately harmful to the body and harmful to everybody around you because it is a state of dysfunction ultimately. You can go into some companies and everybody's unhappy. They're all running around fighting against each other as much as they're fighting against the competition.

Uselessly, the energy is being uselessly burned up in fighting and fighting against this and against that and have their positions and their little cliques with their positions. Totally absurd and they're all anxious, intense. Insane.

Presence is very different. It is a state of high energy, but there's no stress in it. And there's no sleepiness in it whatsoever.

In fact, it is extremely alert. And that's the, then you become very effective not that you have, you're not forced into activity when there's actually nothing useful to do. You're quite happy with not doing without losing the high energy of presence.

You can just sit and be without falling into the vegetative state. You could sit for an hour or two and it's beautiful. And more and more you would enjoy the simple state of being present, the joy of being, of being present with yourself, of feeling your own presence.

Your own is the way of putting it. It's not yours. It's presence.

And when activity is required, presence can flow into doing. And you give all those people, many people who are, those people who are success, very successful in whatever field they of endeavor, those who are very successful and not unhappy, have touched presence in what they do. Now there are others who in the eyes of the world are successful, but really they're very unhappy at the same time.

And there's no point in that, no matter how much money you make. What's the point in making money to making your bodies ill? Everybody else unhappy, including yourself, and then you die.

So you can actually, it is a very different energy energetically than it's a new, that's presence is not, the ego knows nothing of that. That it is possible to be, to put enormous energy into something that you do without stress. If that's what's needed, presence is clear energy, and it can flow into action.

Some sports people know that. They enter the so-called zone, as they say. And when they're in the zone, right action happens and it's joyful.

And every, this is why people watch. They watch because it is beautiful to watch somebody performing an action in the state of presence. Because a little bit of that transmits itself.

It's also joyful to be with somebody who is not active in the state of presence. To some extent that happens here. It is joyful to sit here because also a kind of transmission happens.

But here it is not through action, but through simple being, non-action. Something that transmits itself and awakens that dimension within you. Not that it comes through this form into you as if you didn't have it yet.

No, it is here and something in you recognizes it. That's why it's nice to be here. And the moment it's no longer nice to be here, you've come back into a mind.

As long as it feels good to be here, you're present. When it doesn't feel good to be here anymore, you're absent again, you're back in. So we could say it is as present as relaxed alertness.

If you look at two breeds of dogs, you could say, let's say there's the German Shepherd dog. And some German, quite many German Shepherds, they're excellent guard dogs because they are a little bit nervous. Not all, but they are bred to be nervous, to be alert.

And they go, they look when a visitor comes, they're a bit suspicious and they look at you. And then there's the St. Bernard dog. Now, if you could crossbreed these two, you would get a present dog.

Now, maybe I've given somebody an idea for a new business. And of course, my favorite example of that with human beings, which some of you already know, you have the Buddha. And then you cross the Buddha with the character played in most films by Clint Eastwood.

You cross the two and you have presents. Now, it's not only that the moment you choose presents, you become conscious of sense perceptions for your surroundings. It is also sense perceptions themselves.

When you pay attention to sense perceptions, can help you to enter the state of

presence. To become very conscious of sense perceptions, not to lose yourself in sense perceptions. Now, we'll see the difference in a second.

To become very conscious of sense perceptions and in this setting here, highly recommended. And sense perceptions here are mostly beautiful ones. And that's good.

It's more nature. Mostly what you see here is nature and humans, which is also nature. Let's talk about nature for a moment.

To become conscious of sense perceptions is to look or listen or smell. I mentioned last night to smell the air, which changes. It's a different smell in the morning from the way it smells after it's rained.

If it does in the evening, it is alive. And notice that at the moment of smelling the air, there's no thinking because you cannot smell the air and think. While you smell the air, there's no thought.

Perhaps afterwards the thought interprets the smell or maybe some poem comes into your mind about the air or some haiku or whatever. That's thought. And sometimes thought that comes after presence is more likely to be original and inspired when it comes.

And even a brief stretch of presence is enough sometimes to give rise to an inspired original thought. Not a thought that is of the ego that makes you unhappy and creates more stress and more problem. No, an inspiring, original, alive thought may come.

Not that it has to come, you're quite happy without it. And then you take another breath and smell again and there's no thought. And then you look and in the perception, you look at a flower, a tree, or just a one leaf moving in the wind.

Not necessarily to look at what's spectacular or there's so much here that is spectacular. So much beauty. All the potted plants that in colder climates we have at home and they're little.

And here they're all out there and huge. And there's a lot that is spectacular and that's good to see too, but not just look at the spectacular, huge tropical flowers and so on, but also look at relatively insignificant things. One leaf and there's a slight breeze and the leaf is moving in the breeze.

It's quivering. And stay with that for whatever, a minute, two minutes. This is just one example of many ways in which you can observe the little, the seemingly insignificant.

And as you observe, there's the perception against the background of stillness. There's no labeling mentally of what you're observing because then you would lose the sense perception. You would go into thought.

So you can play with that yourself. See if you can be present with the sense perception without going into thought. And if you go into thought, observe the thought and then let it go and go back to the sense perception.

And so there's more than that. There's not just, at the moment we are talking about visual sense perception. There's not just the sense perception.

You're not just conscious of the leaf moving, quivering slightly. And poets have done that and great artists. They are able to watch in presence and then out of that a poem may come and they talk about some great beauty that came out of the state of presence.

And if it's a great poem, can put you back into the state out of which it came in the author. That's why it's called great. Nothing is called great and humans can recognize it.

That means they're not as insane as they seem to be. Something in humans recognizes the greatness of great art or great poetry or great literature. What is it that makes one work great and the other one is mere fiction or one painting is great and the other one is mere colors put together?

It is the state out of which it came. Was it put together by the mind trying to think of something clever? And a lot of modern artists like that.

Let's try and think of something clever and we make some abstract statement through that. It's fine, but it doesn't touch people in here. It can stimulate the mind.

That's okay on that level. It doesn't touch you here. If it touches you here, it awakens presence.

But you can go directly to that which inspired many artists and poets, which is nature. Go directly to it and watch the quivering leaf and be still as you watch. Otherwise you have to be, otherwise you can't watch it.

Be with it and notice there's the form, whatever it is, the leaf moving in the wind. Is there anything else there apart from the form? Now you could lose yourself in that form.

You could just go into, and then you fall off the chair. Or you can be there and see that, but also be conscious of that which makes the perception possible. We could say of yourself, not yourself as the person with the history, but of yourself as the consciousness, the attention, the stillness that makes the perception possible.

And that is not something that you can, this is formless. You can't touch it. You can't see it.

You can't say, oh, there it is. Because that which says there it is, is it. So you can never make it into an object of knowledge.

This is an object of perception. But as you perceive, there's more than the object of perception, but the object of perception helps you to find that. The world of form helps you to find the formless, which is that in you, which is beyond form.

So you watch and you're aware of the form, but you're also aware of the background stillness, the alert background stillness that is, you could also call that the I, the I am, which has nothing to do with a person. It's the consciousness itself through which the perception happens or in which the perception happens, which is the formless dimension of who you are, the eternal, formless, timeless dimension, who you are beyond the form, beyond the physical form, beyond the psychological form of me. To be trapped in form is the most dreadful fate.

To go through your whole lifetime and never know who you are or what you are beyond form is dreadful. It's like being in a prison for the whole of your life. So how is it that something seemingly so simple as observing a flower, observing a leaf moving in the wind, observing a blade of grass or a little patch of ground, whatever it is, or a tree or even a distant landscape, the wholeness of it.

It is amazing that that can be an entry point direct perception, an entry point into who you are, the formless. And these are incredible things, but just watch and be aware of the watcher, not only what is being watched, but also feel, sense, be the being, the consciousness that makes that flower possible. Or watch the sky that changes probably this afternoon as it has done in the past few days.

In the afternoon, clouds start coming in and the light changes and you can watch that and you can watch the movement of the clouds. And as you watch, be aware of the presence without which there would be no cloud movements. Do you think there would be the movement of clouds coming in if you weren't watching it?

Of course not. There are no clouds. It requires a consciousness to see, otherwise they're only atoms.

There's the game, the play of atoms and molecules. There are no clouds, atoms and molecules playing. And through you arises a whole world.

And so you're not, be conscious of that essence in you, which is consciousness, the I am presence, that makes the whole thing, all this possible. And so sense perception is vital. It is much closer to who you are than thought.

Thought is much further removed. So, and in most humans, sense perceptions are only peripheral because there's so much thought in them that there isn't much time for listening or watching. They hardly ever, they just listen or watch enough not to have an accident or to bump into something or, and sometimes they're even that, there's so much thinking that they do have an accident because they're not present enough.

And of course, when you perform a dangerous activity, then you have to be present. When you're in something, certain dangerous activities require absolute presence and one thought and you're gone. And I had a very, the actor Christopher Reeve died recently.

I was in the state of Chicago when it happened. And I saw on television, they showed an interview with him that was done just a few months before he died. And as you know, he, as they rightly pointed out in the interview, he became a superman after his accident before it was just a role.

But then he was confronted with the incredible limitation of form and it seems that he became quite peaceful. But we are not, we do not need to seek out danger to be present. Some people believe that that's what they need to do.

And so they get addicted almost to an activity because it is so liberating compared to their normal state. It is so liberating, you feel so much more alive when you are present that they need to go back and then climb another wall and another and another. And perhaps one day a thought comes in at the wrong, just as they grasp for the next ledge on the rock and that's it.

Oh, so here we, sense perceptions are also an opening into presence. And that's an important practice while we are here. Sense perceptions as an opening into presence, if done rightly.

So there's always two dimension to a sense perception, that which you are perceiving and that which is perceiving. The form and the formless. And then you go to auditory sense perceptions.

Beautiful. And again, there's no calling it of good or bad. It's all equal.

When you are practicing sense perception, you allow whatever sense, whatever noise is there to be there. So there may, there's a bird song, many different birds, the crickets, whatever they are at night. That's a beautiful chorus.

Wonderful to just listen to that. There is the leaves in the wind. All different noises.

And that's modern humans don't, cannot listen to it anymore. There's too much thinking. And as you listen, be aware of the noise and of the background.

The perception is the foreground. The consciousness, the stillness, the presence is the background. And it is you.

It is the formless you. And this is at this very moment, you can be in that state. You can listen to the voice.

You can also see the room. That's the visual. But you can also sense there's an

underlying stillness.

And that is yourself beyond form. The I am presence has no form. And when you are in touch with that, you no longer mind when the form doesn't stay or when the form isn't the most pleasant of forms, like occasionally a heavy truck comes up the road here.

And it goes. And you can listen to that also and continue to feel the background where that arises. Unaffected by the form, the more you are rooted in the background.

I'm saying, whenever we use language, we create a duality. I say, you are rooted in the background or I say, you are conscious of the background. That's not how it is.

But the moment we form a sentence, we have a subject and an object and we have duality. What really happens is you become conscious of yourself. It is self-awareness.

It is self-realization. It's not that you are conscious of consciousness because that's what it is. Consciousness is conscious of itself.

And it's you. You cannot become an object to yourself. You can't make yourself into an object.

Self is eternal subject. All these different beautiful sounds and you have the sound and the inner stillness. There's one bird here somewhere that sounds like a cell phone.

Maybe you'll hear it. I saw one man who was looking around for his cell phone. That's the conditioning from out there.

So we have visual sense perception. And so sometimes look at something small and at other times, it may be good to practice visual sense perception, looking at a totality of a landscape, either looking out there or looking at a group of trees or growth or bushes. Take in a larger space.

Practice with different ways of looking. The tiniest to larger to the spaciousness of the sky. There may be a little beetle crawling on the floor in your room.

And there are lots of little beetles. And sometimes when they hear this, and then you can watch that. And again, be conscious, not lose yourself in it.

Just watch. And you may want to pick it up either on a piece of paper and put it outside. But watch it first before you put it outside.

It crawls. And if it notices your presence, the beetle stops. And sometimes the head goes in.

And then if it notices that you are getting closer, you're touching it, all its legs go in. Also it becomes a little, almost a ball. And it will stay like that for minutes.

It can wait longer than you can. That's why it survived for millions of years. Simply because it can wait.

And there's a beauty there too. And it's this life or consciousness appearing in that particular form. And you appear as a form, also appear for a little while, not much longer than the beetle.

Beetle is maybe a few weeks or months. And you are a few years, that's all. You appear also as a form, a physical and psychological form for a little while.

Unique, perhaps more unique than the beetle. I don't know if every beetle is unique or whether you can't tell the difference. At first sight, you can't tell the difference.

One beetle looks very much like any other beetle. But probably to the beetle, the humans look the same too. But we are probably safe to say that there are subtle differences.

No two forms are ever totally the same. We mentioned snowflakes last night. Or human beings, you with your particular physical form.

You could recognize a close friend. But all the billions of humans on the planet, there's not one that looks the same. You would always be able to pick out somebody that you know well.

Or your father or your mother. Nobody's quite the same. So there is a uniqueness to the form.

And yet it evaporates very quickly. And it's gone. That uniqueness is gone.

And if that's all you know, then it's a very sad thing. And then the universe doesn't really make sense. Why create something unique and then destroy it?

Well, because the universe is playing with form. It's when you watch, if you saw life forms being born and dying and speed it up on a film, you would see that it is a play. You would see plants.

And sometimes they have made films like that, where you can see a plant coming out of the soil. And you speed it up over several days with seed in one minute. And it goes.

And then it withers. And then if you speed it up even more, you see hundreds and thousands of different plants and trees going. And humans coming out of the womb and growing and running around here and there.

And then shrinking, becoming wrinkled, shrinking and gone. And then, but at the same time, others are already on their way. They're coming.

So it's a continuous. Something, nothing. Form, formless.

The two dimensions. And finding that, yes, although you are unique, not only your appearance, but also your life story. Nobody has quite the same life story as you.

Basically, in their deeper structure, they're all very similar, if not the same. The deep structure of a life story, any life story. In any life story, for example, something goes wrong.

That makes it interesting. If nothing went wrong, there would be no story. Look at any film or any novel.

The deep structure in every film or every novel, I can't think of any exceptions, but there may be one or two. But to watch those, you would have to be really present. If nothing goes wrong, it's not interesting.

It's the moment something goes wrong, the story starts. Any novel or any film, look at it. It doesn't matter what.

You can always say, okay, what happens? Well, at some point, she leaves him. He dies.

They lose something. They become ill. Something, or they, whatever.

Something starts going wrong, and that's why it's interesting. And that's the life of form. That's how it works.

And if you had a holiday in which absolutely nothing goes wrong, it's conceivable, although unlikely, but it's conceivable, you wouldn't remember nothing. But if something went very wrong, you would remember it for the rest of your life. And you could talk about it.

You remember that happened. That's the life of form. So there's the uniqueness of your story.

On the one hand, it's unique. Nobody has quite the same life story as you. And yet, deep down, it's not that unique.

And yet, also yet, it's destined to dissolve very quickly, just like a cloud. Every cloud is unique in that particular form. But as you look at it, it's already dissolving and changing.

So we honor the uniqueness of the form. We honor the form that we are, not in essence, but as we appear, our life circumstances and the physical form without becoming trapped in that. So this is why we are here, to touch the formless within ourselves, to be it, to recognize it.

And what do we use? We use the form as an entry point. We're not saying, although I'm

not condemning that, it's another way.

When in some spiritual traditions, they say, do not look at beauty. Do not look at anything. Avert your eyes.

Don't be seduced by sense perception. They say, just look at the floor. All this, they might say, they do it in some Buddhist traditions, and I love Buddhism.

It's beautiful. All this is illusion in some way. Of course, that's true.

It's all destined to dissolve very quickly. And we form in that sense. It is an illusion.

It is a dream. So don't look. Just don't get into sense perceptions.

Just be conscious of consciousness. That may work too. It's another way of entering.

This perhaps is more accessible for humans that are alive now, perhaps. It's at least for those who are here. But beauty is hiding in every form.

And beauty is not the external appearance ultimately, but the essence in each form, which is the same essence that you discover when you are conscious of the consciousness that you are, that is perceiving. Then you realize the same essence of consciousness is in that form, taking temporary expression as that form. And so it is the beauty lies in that the true essence of beauty is always beyond the form appearance.

It's something that shines through the form. And that is the same in humans. True beauty in humans is not of the form.

It shines through the form. You can sometimes see it in, even in people whose body is crippled. You can sometimes see if they have surrendered, you can see beauty shining through the form.

Or people who are close to death, that light shines through. So sense perceptions as an entry point into yourself. So not only do sense perceptions keep you present, they are also an opening into the formless dimension, which of course it is presence.

Presence is formless, unconditioned consciousness. And then we have touch, neglected sense perception relatively, probably the first one in the evolution of the species. Probably the first sense perceptions was touch when little worms crawling.

And that was the beginning of a world arising. That was a very little world at first. So to occasionally pick something up and feel it fully, it's beautiful.

And again, you cannot feel it fully unless you're completely attentive to what it feels like. And there's no need to label it, just feel. And who is it or what is it that feels?

Who or what is it that makes the sense perception possible? Your presence,

consciousness itself, who you are, the stillness in the background against which the sense perception happens. And that if you can live like that in the two dimensions, you are a master and you are a blessing on the planet because a human being who can live in the two dimensions, not being seduced by form into believing that that's all there is and not yet disappearing into the formless and saying, I'm not going to be bothered with anything anymore.

I'm not going to wash my hands even anymore because it's all form. No, be here as a bridge between the two dimensions. The formless and the entire world here is lost in one, in form.

We don't need to improve. This is not a workshop where we try to improve the world of form. And there's a place for that also, that's good.

But what the world needs is for humans to find that hidden dimension, the spiritual, because that's what spiritual is. Spiritual is not a belief. Spiritual is the formless dimension in yourself.

And that's not something to think about. It's something to experience at this moment. Sense perception, background, the I am presence.

It has no attributes. It's not big or small or young or old. It has no age or time to it.

And if you can go into the world and live and be in the two as a bridge, then you affect the world of form. Anybody who is rooted in eternity, in essence, will deal with and relate to the world of form in a different way and will affect the world of form. So it's not just the two dimensions are not separate.

They hang together. And anyone being in touch with that will change the world without needing to change it or wanting to change it. He cannot or she or he or she cannot not change the world.

So you become a blessing when you are in touch with that which ultimately means yourself. And then relate to people and continuously sense the background in any interaction. Sense the background of yourself as space.

And then in any interaction, there's the spacious background of consciousness. And there's the form, there's the words that come. There's the sense perception.

There's what you're talking about. And you're not losing yourself in what you're talking about. Words come, but as the words are spoken, there's still a consciousness of consciousness, stillness in the background.

There must be a very important message out there. Maybe what he's saying is it's time to wake up. Humanity needs to wake up.

He's so excited. I think that's what he's saying. Okay.

Follow the sound with your attention until only attention remains, which is presence. The sound is form, that which is there before and after the sound and underneath the sound is formless. And now as you listen to the sound, be aware of that which is listening, that which makes the listening possible, the I am presence.

Form and formless. And the loudspeaker out there represents the world, which says, this is so important. You must give attention to this.

This really matters, absolutely. And that's your challenge, not to lose yourself in that. You really have to drink Coca-Cola.

You must vote for this person. You have to allow it. You can't fight that because they're all fighting.

That creates the whole thing. You can only watch it and be there as the watcher. And then it changes without you wanting it to change.

Thank you. Thank you. Just sit in the stillness just for a little while until you feel the body's getting up.

With some kinds of music, particularly this kind, the sounds always point to the silence. So when you listen to this kind of music, the silence, what is not there is more important and more powerful than what is there. It's not music that emphasizes the form.

In the case of music, the form is sound. So this kind of music does not emphasize the form as a lot of music does, especially Western music. That can be beautiful too.

Forms can be beautiful too, but this does not emphasize the form. There's only a bare minimum of form and your attention is being drawn to the formless, the silence in between the sounds and underneath. That is when you listen to that, you can listen, instead of listening to the sounds of the flute or whatever it is, listen to the silent spaces to which all the sounds point.

Then the act of listening becomes a meditation and you enter presence because the moment you pay attention to silence, there is stillness in you. And stillness is consciousness, formless, unconditioned, the essence of you. So one could say that kind of music brings out, if you listen rightly, brings out you, the essence of you.

Traditionally, that kind of music has been played by meditating monks. And then later musicians took over and they became good technically, but very often the essence wasn't quite there anymore because in a subtle way, it only seems to work when the person who is playing is in that state. So that, for example, the way in which the sound of the flute subsides, dies, very subtle, it goes from being manifested into unmanifested

and then it takes you with it into the stillness.

Now, this is one example, but amazingly, the same thing operates in any human encounter, interaction, or relationship. We already pointed to it yesterday. Is only the form there in the encounter, the form, the thought forms, are they interacting or is presence present in the interaction between you and another human being?

That is a qualitative difference that's enormous. Sometimes you may hear an interesting talk announced, dialogue between two theologians about something. It's a very interesting topic and say, the sacred in modern civilization or something like that.

And then you go and listen and you are disappointed because they're talking about it, the sacred, but it's all form, but the sacred isn't actually present there. They're only using words and concepts and yet the essence is not there. There's no stillness.

And that's the case with a lot of even spiritual discourse. Sometimes people tell me they read an interesting book and then the author comes into town and gives a talk and they go there and then they're disappointed because the book was more interesting than the author. And the author didn't seem to embody what he talked or she or she talked about in the book.

And at other times they do, it happens too. But often people tell me that it wasn't, it didn't, it wasn't, the presence wasn't there. And so that's the whole point of us being here is to access presence in ourselves, access it, deepen it, live it.

That new dimension, not new in terms of time because presence is timeless, but new in the sense that new on the planet. It's a relatively recent phenomenon, maybe only started a few thousand years ago with isolated humans who accessed that dimension within themselves and then attempted to show it to others. They immediately realized it is in everyone.

They immediately realized they are not special. They realized I am not because presence manifested through this form. It does not make this form special.

It does not make this person special. In fact, the opposite is the case. It's because this form, this person has lost the illusion of specialness that it could come through.

And sometimes people ask strange questions. They ask, an interviewer asked me once, how do you explain that it happened to you? Why did this shift happen to you?

Can you explain, don't you feel very lucky that it happened to you? And of course, there's already an error hiding in the question. It's because the you recognized itself as insubstantial that it happened.

The you was not, the me became transparent, recognized it's nothingness. It's really all.

The it's non-specialness means nothingness.

Specialness is always ego. Specialness means the form wants to emphasize itself in order to survive, in order to have an identity of me one way or another through identifying with this or that. And then at some point, the recognition comes that that is an illusion.

So the awakening doesn't really happen to anybody. It's when the no-bodiness is recognized, then it's there. It's simply an illusion dissolving.

And of course, in some spiritual seekers, there's still the unconscious need to be special. And the projection is that once I attain enlightenment, awakening, then I will be special and finally be myself. And yet, as long as that entity is there, wanting to obtain something in the future, the specialness that you are, that has nothing to do with the ego specialness, the sort of knowledge, I'm changing the terminology for a second.

You are very special, but not more special than anybody else. There is something absolutely precious at the core of your being. Maybe that's what the Tibetans refer to in the famous mantra, Om Mani Padme Hum, which speaks of the jewel in the lotus.

And that specialness is the very life, the very consciousness that you are. And it is, if anything is divine, if we use the term divine for anything, it is that. It is the formless essence of your being.

It is the indwelling God essence. And really apart from that, everything else is simply, has a dreamlike quality, dreamt by the divine, a divine dream, a dream of form. So that can actually, one can feel the true specialness that you can only sense when the pseudo specialness goes.

The pseudo specialness says, I am more special than you, or at least I'm trying to be. The pseudo specialness can take strangest forms. It can hide in many new forms.

When you think now you've left it behind, even that belief can already be a new specialness. When you finally give away your Rolls Royce and your mansion and get on your bike, and then all the other big cars go past you, and you feel quite superior in a subtle way, more subtle than before. The ego, and the ego operates, and you can observe it in those rare instances when the ego still operates in you.

There's always a subtle comparison of me with others. And there's always, so a comparison implies inferior or superior. You regard yourself as either inferior or superior compared to others.

And the ego is constantly on the lookout to see where it fits in. It wants to be superior, but often that doesn't work. Then it considers itself to be inferior with this strange unfulfilled longing to be superior.

And both are equally strong ego. So somebody who feels inferior does not have a weaker ego. People think ego, people with strong egos are people who feel bigger than anybody else.

People who feel less than anybody else have an equally strong ego. And people who feel too timid to speak up or maybe they don't have a strong enough, no, their ego is very strong. They just don't want to be, they fear what happens to their ego once they speak up in public.

They fear what others may think of them. The image that others have of them may not be what they want, what they desire for themselves as the image that they want for themselves. So when you observe it, it's good to observe the ego in oneself because the ability to observe it in yourself means you're not totally in the grip of it anymore.

So it doesn't mean you have failed. The moment you observe the ego in yourself operating, you may have just thought something or said something and suddenly something takes, ah, ego. And where does that realization come from?

Not from the ego. It comes from presence, the arising presence. It's only from the witnessing presence that you can be aware of a conditioned ego pattern.

And whatever you discover, the more ego you discover in yourself, the more successful you are in awakening. And one could even say that the moment you have recognized the ego in you as ego, it's not ego anymore because it's only truly ego when you are totally identified with that pattern. So for example, when you are discussing something with someone as a group after dinner, discussing some spiritual topic and somebody puts forward their opinion and then you feel strong emotion coming up because you clearly recognize that that opinion is wrong, at least from your point of view.

And so there's immediately an identification with your mental position, which is ego. A mental position is a thought form. This is how it is, an opinion, a thought form.

So identification with a mental position is there, which means the self has gone into the thought, has incarnated one more time. And it's already done that hundreds of times during that day. Has incarnated, you have reincarnated one more time into another thought form.

So instead of having broken the cycle of reincarnation, you've readily gone into another one. And then you put forward your opposing point of view, not in a detached and relaxed way, but with inattention that wants to show that you truly know, but that person does not know. And it's possible that at that moment or a few seconds later, you recognize what's happening.

Can't even say that you recognize what you are doing because you're not doing it. It happens. The ego has a life of its own.

It's a pattern, collective pattern. You are not doing it. The ego happens.

And the ego only happens when you are asleep. And it happens. It's a collective conditioning.

Nothing personal. And then suddenly you see it. Oh, or in the middle of an argument, you see how strong the emotion is that goes with defending your point of view.

And sometimes even the voice goes up. You raise your voice, become very heated argument, they call it. This is how it is.

And that's just a tiny, the ego wants to be superior. It wants to show it doesn't, it's not enough to be superior. You need to be seen to be superior.

And so there's the constant, it's an uneasy existence as an ego. Because even a superior ego goes around fearing that it might be inferior in some way, even if it thinks it's superior. One could go on for hours and days and weeks talking about the ego.

And all that's really needed is to see it. And then what's left is only a pattern that still has a certain momentum, but is no longer renewing itself. So ego is a mixture of mind patterns and emotions.

And so they form an entity, an emotional, mental, emotional entity, one could say, that shifts, it identifies. Sometimes it takes things on board and sometimes it gets rid of things that it just tries to, doesn't want. So what it identifies with can change, but the core of it are certain basic identifications.

They vary from person to person, but basically they only vary slightly. It's basically identification. So it's basically the same.

So you could, you can identify with, sometimes one can observe the ego, can identify one moment it competes with a person and the next moment it identifies with that person. I knew a mother who, whenever the mother was talking to other people about her daughter who married a rich husband, she would incorporate her daughter into herself image. And as soon after she met somebody would mention that her wealthy daughter and the mansion and so on and the yacht.

So, and so you couldn't meet this woman for five minutes before she had mentioned her wealthy daughter and that's all. So she incorporated that into herself image. But when she actually visited her daughter, she competed, she resented that her daughter had married this rich husband, but she hadn't.

And so there was a competition with her daughter and a lot of hostility. So when she was with her daughter, the ego was competing against the daughter. When she was away from her daughter, the ego incorporated her daughter and it's always identification with

something that you are not, but you're hoping that by adding it to who you think you are, that you can grow in your sense of self.

And it works in the sense that you can grow in your sense of self, but only in your illusory sense of self. And so the ego traditionally, there are only two ways. For the ego to be transcended and that is it gets knocked out of you by life through the suffering or through the coming into contact with the spiritual teaching.

And usually the two go together, but sometimes suffering is enough for some people and they don't need a teacher anymore. Life doesn't leave you any identifications. It takes them away from you and then you're left with nothing.

You don't know who you are anymore and there you sit. Everything has crumbled around you and maybe you don't even have much longer to live. It's possible too.

Even future has been taken away and there you sit, not knowing who you are anymore because all identifications have been removed. And now this is no guarantee that now the ego is transcended because you could even there, the ego could still form a new image of itself as someone who has been dreadfully wronged by life. No person has had a worse fate than me and there you have another ego.

Life has taken away all identifications and you have escaped into, you have suddenly immediately invented a new story for yourself which says you're the greatest victim of all of life. And from then on you can have resentment against everything and everybody. Look at all these people.

I hate them. And God, what you did to me, I'll never forget that. And yet at other times it can happen that a new story is not invented.

The ego has come to an end and those people suddenly wake up and say, where does that peace come from? I feel so peaceful. That's often the first question.

And they smile and they don't know why they smile. And then somebody comes and say, why are you smiling? And say, I don't know.

There are some humans coming into this world now. Some still have a heavy, they inherit as I did, as many of you did. They inherit all the heavy ego structures that have built up over thousands and thousands of years.

And then you have to, it's painful. You create suffering for yourself. Believing that life does it to you.

And then there's so much suffering that finally it dissolves. You can't stand it anymore. I can't live with myself anymore.

And you suddenly realize it's all self-created. But there are some humans coming into

this world now who have relatively little ego here and there. So they may not have to go what we had to go through.

And that's good. Some may be born into relatively conscious parents, background, environment. Some may come to talks at an early age.

And some don't need that at all. And yet they are still in conflict with the surrounding culture because they're at school somewhere. They're living this mad world.

And they may not necessarily be able to adjust to this world. But they'll survive. And the world won't.

They are part of what is stronger than the mad world that is arising now. So ego, one way of transcending ego is simply to recognize it in yourself. That's already a transcendence.

The other is to be very conscious of the thoughts that go through your head because ego is thought, identification with thought plus the emotions that accompany those thoughts. And that is our practice here. It's not only recognizing ego when it appears.

It's also to be very much conscious of the root of ego. And the root of ego is thought and identification with thought, with thinking. And ultimately the ego cannot go away.

It can perhaps disappear for brief moments, but it cannot dissolve unless you go beyond compulsive thinking. And that is our task so that we can more and more live in the state of no thought. We've already suggested ways of entering the state of no thought, which is called presence.

We can call presence, we can call awareness, we can call stillness, alert stillness, not asleep stillness. Asleep stillness means you're falling below thought. But to transcend thought is to rise above thought.

And then you realize whenever you think there is a diminished degree of alertness compared to the state of no thought, where you have risen above thought. When you look at a flower, when you take one conscious step, when you perform one conscious action, conscious meaning you're totally there without the interference of mental labels, without making something into a means to an end. That's conscious, completely present.

There you are awake and then thought comes in and you can sense the diminished degree of wakefulness as the moment thought identification with thought comes in. And you can actually feel in yourself or observe in somebody else how they go from clarity to a dreamlike state, which often means there's a problem that you need to solve, there's a memory, there's a future situation that you're thinking about. You're moving into away from what is.

So we've suggested ways of sustaining without making an effort. It's no effort. You can't make an effort to be present.

A way of sustaining presence for more than a moment by conscious looking, by conscious self-sense perception, by conscious action, by conscious listening, by consciously being in the body. These are all ways of exiting the noise machine in the head. And there's another one that will work for some of you, but not for all.

And we cannot call it method. It is the most direct way. It's not a method because method implies there's a little bit of distance.

The most direct way is simply, and some people will tell you you can't do that. Of course they tell you that because they couldn't do it. One way is simply to stop thinking because you decide that you want to stop thinking.

Now, that's an interesting one. That requires a considerable degree of alertness, sustained alertness. If you can sustain alertness, this is what people try to do when they practice meditation techniques.

But here I'm saying, examine the possibility of entering that state without any technique and without any method, simply by allowing yourself to be present and alert. And effort is not involved, and yet you need the attitude of a warrior. You need the, I occasionally use the expression, the sword of presence.

And with that sword, you cut through time because time is and thought go together. If you remove time, thought collapses also. If you remove thought, there's no more time.

There's only this moment because all past and all future are thought forms. If anybody else knows the greater truth, you can tell me now and can tell me that you have actually touched the future, have experienced it. Some might tell me, yes, but I foresaw the future.

Well, when did you foresee it? In the now, surely. So you both, if you have the ability to foresee the future, when does that happen?

You foresee it at this moment. And when it comes, it's also this moment. That's not philosophy.

It's too simple to be philosophy. It is self-evident. So anything that's self-evident cannot become philosophy.

So I'm not saying that it is not possible to predict what we call the future, but it's still always now. That's all we need to know and recognize. It's still always now.

So past and future only exist as thoughts in your head because in your experience, actual experience, direct experience, all you have is the present moment ever. That's all.

So past and future are abstractions, mental abstractions.

The moment you stop thinking, there's no past and future. There is the enormous aliveness and vitality and intelligence of the present moment. The power of life itself is there.

And the present moment before, when you were absorbed in past and future and thinking, the present moment seemed totally insignificant because you were concerned with the vastness of past and the vastness of future and me in the middle of all that. And what looked like the smallest thing, the present moment, is really, it's like splitting the atom. Present moment recognition means you discover that in the tiniest thing is concealed the most enormous amount of energy.

The atom is the present moment and it suddenly splits and reveals it is the very core of all energy, the very heart of all life energy, emanates from now, the present moment. And before it seemed so insignificant, the tiniest thing. So here we are splitting the atom, but it's not going to be made into a weapon.

It's simply a, because it cannot be a weapon. Weapon means always separation, me against you. So here we are recognizing thought and time go together.

We abolish time, we abolish thought. Doesn't matter where you start. If you say there's only this moment, automatically thinking subsides and you enter presence.

Or if you say, okay, there's nothing to think about. I'll just be still, that's it. And alert, that's it, that's it.

No past, no future. And enormous energy, but subtle energy, not gross, it's not noisy energy. It's not that energy.

So is it possible, for some people it is, they may not have realized that it is possible to simply stop thinking. The entire message of some spiritual teachers is to stop thinking. Some of them never said it openly.

Perhaps they didn't want to shock the audience. The entire teaching of Krishnamurti can be reduced to don't think. And the entire spiritual teaching, if anybody, can be reduced to don't think.

But Krishnamurti went about the roundabout way and said, let's investigate, can thought solve our problems? Now let's think about that. No.

And there was one teacher whom I love, my favorite quote by that teacher, Nisargadatta Maharaj, who wrote, I Am That. Well, he didn't write it, he spoke it. His definition of presence or meditation, which is the same.

What is meditation? What is presence? And he was a radical teacher.

He was very much like a Zen teacher. He would shout at you. And so his definition was simply, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts.

Now this is not, I inviting you, that is one way, but it's not for everyone. There's another related way that is open to more people. And that is the discovery that already in your life, there are many moments of no thought.

You just hadn't noticed. Because if there were not many brief moments of no thought, you would be on the verge of insanity, if not insane. It is out of the brief gaps of no thought that a sense of aliveness arises that is still there, even in people whose mind is very active.

Where a sense of occasional glimpses of joy arise, occasional glimpses of peace arise. And there are humans who don't have these gaps anymore, because their mind is continuously annoyed and they are very, very unhappy. And some go insane and some commit suicide.

It's not that they don't have the stillness, it's covered up continuously. But in still the majority of humans, there are gaps of no thought and they never noticed. And the wonderful thing is when you make that conscious, you notice that there are gaps of no thought.

Then the gaps become longer. They become conscious. Because one is so, humans are so identified with mind, to the thinking mind, the gaps when you're not thinking are totally meaningless.

It doesn't even know they're there. And it cannot do anything with them. So you cannot remember that you had gaps of no thought, except sometimes perhaps when they were extremely more prolonged than others.

You might remember that once you climbed a mountain and it took you four or five hours to get to the top. And the exertion, the physical exertion was such that you just couldn't think anymore. And when you finally arrived at the top, there was total stillness.

And at that moment, the sun rose and there you stood. And you remember it for the rest of your life, the incredible sense of aliveness that you experienced there. And you experienced it because there was complete stillness.

But I'm not talking about these great realizations that also of course come and go, but the little ones. For example, every time you look at something, every time your glance falls upon something, whatever it may be, a person, an object, a tree, a flower, the sky, at the first moment of perception, there's no thought. There is always a gap.

When you first perceive something, there's a gap of about a second, sometimes two seconds, before some kind of naming comes in, which is thought. And most people are

not aware that that is there. If you become aware that the moment you start to listen to a sound before the mind names it, there is a gap of pure perception.

And that is there. And it is out of these gaps during the day that you still find life worth living. It is not because your thought is justifying to yourself, well, it's still worth living because I might still make it.

That is a very, it's a secondary, and that doesn't really work that well. And a point comes when the mind will tell you, it's too late now, I'm not going to make it. So you cannot, life cannot be made into this fear that it's worth living by some kind of mental justification.

Why you should still be here. It works for a little while, it's a substitute. But to realize that life is worth living, that life is good beyond the forms, because when you look at the forms of life, you might draw the conclusion that life is not good because all the forms die sooner or later.

So, but to realize that life is good in essence, and that in essence, there is nothing that is not life. And the realization that death is not the opposite of life, that life has no opposite, only birth has an opposite, and that's death. The realization that there is a goodness to life, despite the fact that everything around you dies.

Despite the fact that even your physical form is already condemned to death, everyone. Despite the fact that somebody close to you might disappear at any moment, including yourself. You could slip on a banana skin when you walk out of here, and that's the end of it.

You don't know, or I could. And does this mean that life is bad? The fact that forms are impermanent, that they're not reliable, that all structures are unstable, that the stability of the physical universe is only a delusion.

When you go into big cities, which is the big buildings, oh, that's going to last forever. No, not at all. It could dissolve any moment.

Occasionally we see that when huge buildings collapse and everybody's dreadfully shocked. That looked so permanent. And yet, underneath that, so here we have the impermanent nature of all the, it's a, it's a universe in flux.

It's not stable. It's the world of form. And it's, it's a dance, a dance of form.

But hiding underneath all the forms of life is life. The one unmanifested, still, ever present essence. And you, that reveals itself.

The moment the forms, the primordial forms, which are thought forms, subside, then the clear sky within is suddenly visible. The clear sky, the still space of presence. And so that is to be realized.

And then you realize, out of, and from that comes that spaciousness within, out of that comes an intense sense of aliveness, beingness. And there lies the realization that life is good, despite appearances. And there comes the realization that even death is part of the goodness of life.

And death is no longer the great monster that lurks somewhere that you need to shut out and don't, mustn't think about that and hide all the dead bodies. That's what our civilization does. They, they not only hide the dead bodies, they even put makeup on dead bodies.

[Speaker 2] (3:26:25 - 3:26:50)

And it's, life is good.

[Speaker 1] (3:26:51 - 3:42:20)

That realization comes when you realize, it's actually wonderful to realize how impermanent all the forms around you are. To watch dissolving forms means the formless comes up in you. It's only from there that you can watch that and not react.

That is the deathless. And that the deathless is there when, in the moment that thought, which is primordial form, subsides. And so the goodness of life is felt the more you have space inside you.

I mean, everybody has equal space, but the more you know it, the more you realize it. Because if the fact that everybody has exactly the same space within as their essence, even within and without ultimately is meaningless. It doesn't, it's very much like saying everybody is tremendously wealthy, but some people have forgotten their bank account number.

And if you've forgotten your bank account number that has a hundred million dollars in it, you're poor or are you wealthy? It's a question of perspective. This is not a good analogy because a hundred million dollars would make no difference to you really, to the joy of life, whether you know that life is good.

So be aware that already that space of no thought is already in you many times during the day. And again, be aware of sense perception and see when you first listen, when you first look at something, even when you first touch something, there is a brief moment of no naming, simply a still perception. And that's where truly there's direct experience at that moment.

The moment you start thinking and naming, it's no longer direct experience, it's an abstraction. And you've brought in the past. Now, thought can still operate in you, but it is no longer self-serving then.

It still operates when it is needed. And those humans who can think well, there are not many humans who can think well, most are simply burdened with noise in the head. Those humans who think creatively, who have original thoughts, not deep thoughts, they don't exist.

Deep thoughts don't exist, but an original thought can come out of the depths of stillness. Not every thought is a form, it can point to the depths, but in itself, it cannot be deep. No thought is deep.

So humans who can think originally, original thinkers, creative thinkers, inspiring thinkers, the way they think is they enter the state of alertness and many of them, they don't even know that that's what they do. They enter the state of alertness and they step back into no thought very briefly and then the words come. When they have uttered a certain sequence of words, they step back into no thought.

Briefly, you may not even notice it. It's not that they become still and suddenly start meditating. They step back into no thought.

There's a brief, it could only, might be only two seconds and some of them may feel the inner body and they don't even know it. They just feel alive and then out of that aliveness come words, but that aliveness is still vital. It is still and vital.

And there's the primordial intelligence there that is consciousness itself that they touch and that's also artists create out of that. They become still and then it happens. So people who think creatively, it simply happens.

It's not even they don't think. It's something that happens by itself. It's a beautiful process.

Normal humans who don't, they are burdened by totally repetitive thoughts. Always the same kind of thing go round and round in the head and there are many humans who have not had one original thought in 20, 30, 40 years. Why not?

Because they cannot step back, not for a moment, out of the noise machine, out of the continuous formation of thoughts and repetition of the same thoughts, cannot step back into stillness and for even five seconds and then if they did for the first time, they would have an original, an alive thought. I was amazed some years ago when my mother came to visit me and my mother, like everybody else, is burdened with a noise machine in the head. She came to stay with me for a couple of weeks and first I was shocked because there's so much noise talking and continuous and it's always, and it's not personal.

It's not because my mother is deficient. It's simply the human condition and I just, all I could do was sit there and be and listen and allow her to go through the motions of speaking and it's always the same. It is normal too and then I was still and I was still, still, still and at some point after a few days, she became suddenly still and she didn't

speak for about a minute and then suddenly came in, what she said then was, I found amazing.

What she said then is the beginning of all spiritual seeking, is the beginning of all philosophy, lies at the very beginning of all that and she said, isn't it strange? We are born and then we die. That was an original true thought and that came perhaps because some of the stillness was activated for a moment, that dimension in her and so on.

So even the noisiest and that question is more important than the answer. Just to dwell with that question. You don't even need to answer it on a conceptual level.

Just have that question there and allow the strangeness of birth and death to be there. Why do we need to explain it? You can arrive at a knowing that is beyond concepts by simply allowing the mystery of life to be there.

We are born and then we die. So to be creative, a creative thinker, it's a continuous moving back and forth between nothingness, emptiness, you dissolve into nothingness and then form comes back. Nothingness, no thingness, thingness.

No thingness, thingness. Because every thought is a thing, not a physical thing, but it's a form and a form is a thing. So discover that is how to think creatively.

But it's essential here for you to discover that already that dimension is present in your life. It may be there when you open your eyes in the morning. You wake up and there's a moment of when you haven't remembered, you're not remembered your past and you're not thinking about the future and you haven't remembered your problems.

There's simply aware presence. Ah, there it is. Now it is whether or not you achieve mastery in this or that doesn't really matter.

Some people achieve mastery in kicking a ball or throwing a ball. And in there they have, if they are doing it well, they're doing it without thought. In other words, they are not doing it at all.

It's happening. They link into a greater whole that is performing through them. A greater intelligence is acting through them.

To see that in action is always beautiful. And most humans love watching it. They don't know why.

I always say, why otherwise would they watch people either kicking or throwing or hitting a ball for hours and hours? Well, ego comes in too because you identify with a particular team. And then the team loses and you go, you're depressed for three days.

Our team has lost. We have been defeated. So there are different approaches to the same.

You can look simply for where the spaces already are in your life. And as they become conscious, more conscious, they become deepened and prolonged. And then if that works for you, but to simply, as Nisargadatta said, the refusal, the radical refusal to harbor thoughts, don't misunderstand that.

It does not involve willpower as such, as we know it. It does not involve opposing something. It does not involve fighting thought.

You cannot fight against a thought. You could for a little while, you could suppress a thought. But while you suppress the thought, more and more thoughts accumulate behind that one.

And eventually the lid will blow off. You could say, I'm not going to think. And you will notice your body will become tense and you may stop breathing.

And it may work for a little while, but that's not it. It's not the arising of presence. It is thought trying to suppress thought.

And then the slightest thing happens while you're doing that. Somebody knocks at the door. Leave me alone.

Can't you see I'm meditating? So that's, it can be misunderstood. That's perhaps why Krishnamurti never said it.

There is no effort involved and yet there's intense energy there. Your body is quite relaxed in that state, but you are present throughout the body. Every cell is alive with presence.

Every cell alive with presence. And you sense the entire body. And it is simply the alertness that does it, not some kind of willpower, not some kind of wanting.

The alertness is there that is such that it doesn't allow thought to come. And if thought does come, it comes into the field of alertness, which is so bright. This is an analogy.

It's so filled with light that the thought comes and the moment it reaches the alertness, it dissolves in it. It goes... And sometimes you can notice the thought coming up and you can, you know that the eyes and the brain are very closely related.

They say the eyes, the cells of the eyes are the same as the brain cells. I don't know if that's true. You can blink.

If a thought tries to creep up into alertness and you notice that the thought is creeping up, you blink once and you blink it away.

[Speaker 2] (3:42:21 - 3:42:21)

It's gone.

[Speaker 1] (3:42:24 - 4:13:09)

It's a strange... That's a wonderful practice is to be practiced with your partner or anybody that you know well or once you get used to it, even anybody that you don't know well, is to look into each other's eyes. It's not called staring.

It's called gazing. Because staring is the... I'm going to outstare you.

Staring is ego, who can last longer and so on. No, it's... We could call it gazing.

In some spiritual circles, it is done a lot. In some spiritual circles, it is overdone. But there's a beauty to it when it happens naturally or as together with your partner, someone you look into each other's eyes for a long time and the point of it is to share the space of thoughtless presence where you merge beyond thought.

The point of it is not to think about the other person or yourself but simply to abide in no thought while the looking happens and that you merge virtually because when thought doesn't operate, there's no thought of me and the other anymore. There's simply a oneness that arises, a space of presence arises between you. And if thoughts do come in, you can either recognize them as thoughts and say they're not important.

It's just a thought and you allow it to pass through or you can blink it away just once or twice. Blink. One blink is enough usually.

A little thought comes, one blink, it's gone. Or it comes and it drifts away. And to realize thought always pretends to be important and so you have to recognize its non-importance which is actually the case most of the time.

So this is a beautiful practice with anybody but there needs to be usually an agreement with the other person. Sometimes in some spiritual circles or meditation play or retreat places a newcomer comes and they've never been there before and the first person they meet they say, hello, my name is such and the other person goes... It can be very beautiful and it can also, like everything else, it can degenerate into something that you feel you should be doing to fit in or to be spiritual or whatever.

Anything can become that. And then also once you can actually... The same happens when you look...

Once you practice thoughtless, present looking, you can actually do it with people who don't know that you're doing it but not in the way I just described. It's briefer when they talk you go to the supermarket or the store and they say, okay, that'll be $10.50 and you look at that person and for three seconds there's no thought. They never know it.

They think you're working out in your head whether this is correct or not. And many

times or you meet somebody and you shake hands and for a moment it's two seconds, three seconds, there's simply... There's an energy that comes with that.

And don't... The ego can get in there and say, I'm going to do something to you and immediately that's not it at all. That's immediately mind energy.

So the ego can come in and say, I'm going to make you present or it can say, I'm going to heal you or give me three seconds and I'll heal you. No, there's no wanting in that. There's no...

I don't want anything. I don't even want the other person to be more conscious. It's simply joyful to join with that person in presence.

Yes, of course it has an effect but there's no wanting in it. I don't need that person to change and that's why I'm doing it. It is a joyful thing.

It is a joining and it's joyful. And that changes all your interactions. Once you are able to look at another human being and remain free of thought, if only just briefly, enough.

A completely different energy comes into the interaction which has nothing to do with thought energy, mind energy. Yes, and then you speak. Another way, very important now again to bring that dimension into your life, to invite it into your life, not to create it.

You don't create stillness or spaciousness because it's already there. You already discover it. That's...

So don't think you need to bring it about as such. It's there. When you speak to someone, usually it consists of several sentences.

It's a mind stream. You're telling something that something needs to be done or this or that. Come to the end of that particular mind stream as soon as possible and then step back.

Otherwise you go on and on or the other person takes over and then goes on and then you take over and then she takes over, he takes over. And some people don't even need the other person. They are happy to be engaged.

They are happy with a monologue or all they want is somebody to be there they can talk at. And it goes on and on. But it's very easy once you're in a conversation with somebody for the mind stream to take over the interaction completely and then you talk and talk and talk and talk and then the other person says, oh yeah, you're right.

That's it. Then he takes over and then you go... No space.

So to bring to... Also step back here. The similar thing that you do when you wish to think creatively.

Stepping back when the mind... You've said what you had to say. Why carry on?

Step back into presence. You've said your bit. Step back into presence.

If only for three or four seconds, then you speak again. But it's also there. Finding the gaps.

Finding the gaps of no thought in any interaction even when you go to Christmas dinners and talk to your family and so on. Back to no thought where you're simply... Then you look at the other person again.

And in the looking, there is a stillness and there's presence. Very different energy. So that's important so that you don't get lost every time you open your mouth.

As somebody said to me, I can be very spiritual when I sit alone in my room. But the moment I start dealing with people and talking to people, I lose it. And of course, that's when you open your mouth, then the mind stream gets even stronger in many people because it reinforces itself through the other person.

So it's always a stepping back into the no thingness that is the essence of who you are. And then you're back into form. It's a dance.

Life is a dance between form and formlessness. Well, that's how life... That is how when life is lived as it could be lived beautifully, it is that.

For most humans, it's not a dance between form and formless. For most humans, it's being lost in form and feeling the burden of that. They haven't found yet the secret of stepping back because if you know the secret of stepping back into the no thingness, into stillness, into presence, then the world of form, which before was a very frustrating place, awful place really, because things go wrong continuously in the world of form.

And if there's nothing beyond form, you cannot depend on anything out here. You can't trust anybody or anything and everything lets you down eventually because nothing lasts. Every situation lets you down because it's not fulfilling ultimately for a little while.

Every person lets you down because either they leave you or they die. So you can't... In the world of form, on the level of form alone, it's not that reliable, the world of form.

Of course not. It's not meant to be reliable. That's not how it works.

But when you are able to step back, then it's actually a place that you can enjoy because your sense of self, your identity, your sense of beingness, your peace, your aliveness does not depend on it anymore on the forms in your life. You enjoy them, but you don't depend because the very aliveness that you sense and feel and are derives from the formless. So from there, you can enjoy the world of form.

It's a beautiful place too. You could also reject it and then go totally into the formless, but as long as you have a physical body or seem to have, why not enjoy the world of form while you're here? And it's wondrous and beautiful and you don't need...

no longer need to demand that the world, which is a world of form, should satisfy you or make you happy because it won't. You make me happy. The world owes me.

No, it doesn't. The world doesn't owe you anything. The world is supposed to make me happy and give me fulfillment.

No, fulfillment cannot be derived from anything in the world. It is derived directly from the essence of your being at this moment. Then all the things of this world will give you a secondary fulfillment that will be enjoyable because you don't depend on them.

You can enjoy them. You can enjoy the Rolls Royce. You don't even have to give it away, but if you decide to give it away, you can enjoy the bicycle without needing to compare in any way.

The fact that you drive a Rolls Royce doesn't mean you're superior in any way to the next person on a bicycle or the other way around. And you help the people that want to make a difference. This is a great thing.

The main thing in this life is I want to make a difference in this world, but you cannot really make a difference as long as all the mind structures in you have not transcended the collective mind structures that have been running this world for thousands of years. And you can see what that produced by reading a history book or watching TV tonight. Well, not here, but at home.

So you can see what kind of world that has produced. You can only make a true difference by changing inside, by accessing that, by going through that shift in consciousness. And then no matter where you go, you make a difference.

You go into a supermarket, you make a difference there. You go, you make a difference at work. You make a difference at the conference table.

You make a difference wherever you are. Your very presence makes a difference. And what in addition you do actively, that varies from person to person, whether you actively go and help people on one or the other level.

That depends. One person is called upon to do this. Another person is called upon to do that.

You might be drawn to go to some country where people are starving and help there. Or you may continue to have your hairdressing salon and everybody who comes to you feels better when they leave, not because they look better, because they feel better

inside. We are entering the phase of silence from now, except for this person on the chair and except for when perhaps tomorrow morning, tomorrow afternoon, we may ask questions here.

Or if you go and have a session with someone, if you need to say a few words, that's fine too. But I would recommend to observe the silence between now and Wednesday morning when you get up. That's one day and two nights.

Now, one thing for those of you who are not experienced retreatees, retreat attendants, participants, you may find it at first very awkward to sit at a table in the dining hall and nobody is speaking. You may find it awkward if you are sharing a room to be with one or two or three people and you can't talk to them. And you can sense that awkwardness perhaps.

It's the same awkwardness that you feel when you're going to a small elevator and somebody else steps in and you're both standing there and it's going... And usually one of them will break the silence because they can't stand it anymore. You cannot endure 10 floors of silence.

And usually one person will break it and will make a comment about the weather. That's the first thing. It's wet today, isn't it?

Ah, and the other person is relieved and says, yes, it is. And I think it's going to rain even more. Okay, that's it.

It worked. So if you feel the awkwardness and feel... What do you do then?

Very simple. Watch the feeling of awkwardness and allow it to be there so that you become the space around the awkwardness. There's the awkwardness and there's, oh, I feel awkward.

And then you feel it. You feel what it is that you feel. So you bring consciousness to it.

And you allow it. You don't say, oh, I shouldn't be feeling awkward because he talked about it. No, I'm not saying don't feel awkward.

I feel, say, when you feel awkward, know that you're feeling awkward and say, it's okay to feel awkward. I allow myself to feel awkward. The allowing also brings the space.

Whatever you allow, there's immediate allowing any condition, internal or external, saying I allow it to be there because it's here now. What can I do? It's the present form of this moment.

You allow it. The allowing means immediately there's a space around it. And you are the allowing space because space contains it all.

Space allows everything to be there. And that is another way of, of course, accessing spaciousness or presence. No matter what the condition is, the moment you allow the condition, what external, internal, awkwardness, whatever, the moment you say, oh, there it is.

I can feel it and it's okay. The moment you allow it, you have transcended the condition because you've become the consciousness in which the condition appears. Whereas before you were trapped in the condition and you were a little limited by the condition.

Your self was in the condition, your sense of self. You incarnated into the condition. And now you step out of the condition and allow the condition.

You have the space for all conditions. And that's beautiful. So, and once you allow it, you transcend.

And that means when you transcend a condition for a little while, it's still there. And then usually it dissolves because you're not feeding it anymore. If you were resisting, if you want to prolong a condition, you resist it.

External or internal. If you want to prolong it, you create inner resistance or some mental resistance. I'm feeling this, but I shouldn't be.

Unnecessary. Allow this moment to be as it is, no matter what form it takes. And if you do that, that alone takes you to the formless.

That alone would take you to the formless because the formless is the allowing, the space that is there the moment you allow. It's a stepping back from the condition. Stepping, one could almost say you take the self out of the condition.

You take the self out of the condition. And the self is recognized as space, not as something. The self is recognized in its essence as no thingness.

That is the self that the Hindu teachings talk about, the great self, the one self. And then there's a little self that identifies with a condition, a thought, an emotion, a form, a car, whatever. That's the little self.

And that the Buddha recognized that as an illusion. Buddha said, there is no self. What people regard as themselves, as their self is an illusion.

There is no self. And he's right because he was speaking about the self as form. Any form is not who you are.

Any condition is not who you are. So although the Hindu teachings and the Buddhist teachings seem to contradict each other, they're talking about the same thing. They're just using different terms.

Because all that can be verified in your immediate experience. They are not abstract notions to believe in. For many people, they are.

They say, the Buddhist says there is no self. And then the Hindu scholar comes and says, yes, there is a great self. Krishna said.

They, it's so, find out for yourself before you discuss. So the awkwardness will go away if you allow it to be there, if it's there. And then actually it's quite nice to be in silence together, in stillness together.

And to eat your meal one spoonful at a time and taste it perhaps even more. Don't make a ritual out of anything. Don't say, I'm going to chew 25.

When you are in silence, the mind will sometimes invent games to keep itself busy. It'll devise its own crossword puzzles in the head. And then you start counting the people in the room and you become Mr. Bean. Mr. Bean is so funny because there's always a basic truth of how the mind operates and he just exaggerates it a little. And talking about crossword puzzles, don't go into your room and get the crossword puzzles out. Watch the mind, as the Buddhists say.

The Buddhists in Buddhist monasteries, when they want you to shut up, they say, watch your mind. So while we are in silence, watch your mind. Be the watcher of your mind.

Be the witnessing presence, not only of the thoughts. And you recognize the thoughts as thoughts. And one thing too, especially while we are silent now, don't take your thoughts too seriously.

They are only thoughts. When you take them seriously, then they get bigger and bigger. When you recognize a thought as a thought, it comes and goes.

It's harmless. There's no self in it. If there's no self in thought, every thought is quite harmless.

Nothing wrong with it. Doesn't really matter. Let it drift in, out.

Be in the body as much as possible. Sense perceptions. Look, watch, listen, smell.

Be an alert presence, not a heavy person walking through the gardens here. A heavy me with a heavy past and a heavy problematic future that you carry all of them in your head. Be simply, be an alert presence.

Be consciousness. Be a field of consciousness that walks through the gardens. And there may be one or two rebellious people here who are saying, I'm not going to be told what to do.

And when you see them in the dining hall, they say, okay, I'll have some juice now. Or

they address you and say, what did you think of this afternoon session? Did you get anything out of it?

To which the correct answer, of course, is nothing. Didn't get anything out of it. And so when we talk again, it'll be Wednesday morning.

Well, we will talk here. It'll be Wednesday morning. Yes, tomorrow is Tuesday.

We'll be meeting here twice tomorrow. In the afternoon, we may ask questions that may involve words. Usually it does.

The most pointless talk, by the way, especially on retreats or anywhere, is talking about presence. What it is. What I think it is.

You're either present or not. The mind cannot, can never really understand what presence is. So don't try to.

Sometimes there was a retreat two years ago after a week. Finally, one mind, which is always, it's a human mind, so it's nothing personal, asked me, would you please define in more detail and more clearly what presence is? We had practiced presence for a whole week.

Now the mind demanded a clearer definition of presence so that it can put it in its pocket and take home. A set of concepts and say, okay, now I know what presence is. Now what's the next workshop I can go to?

If your body wants to move, I believe there's a movement class following this. And you can be present. Body can be present.

I can feel that my body wants to move, but I may not come to the class. Tai Chi is a beautiful thing. Some people say that Tai Chi originated when thousands of years ago, some people watched the movement of animals and imitated the movement of animals.

That's one theory, but this may be correct. Another possibility is, because nobody really knows, another possibility is that it originated as spontaneous movement in a human being who was totally present. And then a spontaneous movement happened.

He or she didn't know why. Simply the body went into a slow dance-like movement to express the joy of presence. This is how I see it started.

I can't... Who knows? It happened to me once.

And it happened to Kim. I observed her. She suddenly started moving and she had never studied before when she did that, never done Tai Chi before.

And it was better than Tai Chi because it was totally spontaneous. It came out of

presence. Maybe it's in her genes.

It came out of presence and there was that spontaneous, that movement. And then that was thousands of years ago when perhaps the first person went into that in China. And there were probably some bystanders said, what's that person doing?

It looks incredible. And then perhaps it happened again. The same bystanders came and looked and those bystanders became the first practitioners of Tai Chi because they said, we want to learn that.

And then they got a piece of paper, if they had paper or whatever they had, and said, okay, left arm goes up now. Now the right leg raises, goes up slightly and then it goes down again. And then they start later, they started teaching it.

And miraculously, even though that was turning it around, it still worked in some way. So it works both when the movement comes from the inside out as a spontaneous expression of presence, joyful presence. And it also seems to work from the outside in.

If you do these movements, you enter presence. Seems to work both ways. Well, if you do them rightly and you're not thinking while you're doing them, of course, if you're thinking, okay, my arm needs to be there now and you're not present in that movement because you're already there.

[Speaker 2] (4:15:19 - 4:15:20)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:19:39 - 5:46:07)

As we sit here, let's see if we can be aware of, let me speak as you, see if I can be aware of the presence that I am at this moment. See if I can be aware of the essence of my identity, which is not my past, which is not my thoughts or my emotions or what happened to me, but something deeper, that which is hiding in my story as the sense of I, but usually gets mixed up with my story. It's like one could say it is the light of consciousness and that light, that pure light gets mixed up with form.

One could use the analogy of a film projector. The light is behind the film and there are forms that obscure the light in one way or another. And everybody, this is a strange thing, everybody is aware of who they are, of their innermost sense of self or identity, but through the distorted form of their story, their life, their thoughts and emotions and memories and identifications which are thoughts.

So when we ask, who are you? Usually you mention the identifications that consciousness identified with. I am, that you give your name and then what you do, your, or what you have or own or status or whatever it is that you identify with and then you

present that as who you are.

I am a such and such. I am a somebody. I am a self-made millionaire.

I'm a spiritual seeker and the self-made millionaire, the spiritual seeker, or I'm somebody who failed miserably, another story, all the stories. And then in there somewhere is hiding the sense of me, of self. And that is precious.

Everybody knows that there's something precious that's to do with who they are and that people are so afraid that they lose themselves at some point. And so hiding in the story is the I am that is nothing to do with time, beingness, presence, consciousness itself, before it becomes something. It's born into a form, a thought form, an emotional form.

And so one could ask, what is it in your life or in my life, talking as you, what is it in my life that I can be absolutely sure of? And some philosophers have asked that question. What is it that I cannot doubt?

And they realized, and scientists also ask that question, and they realize that almost everything you can doubt, you can doubt whether this room exists, the people in this room, because you have no direct experience of it, because there's an optical, your eye is a lens, and so it's like a camera lens and that the picture that it captures is projected onto a screen behind it, is then translated into nerve impulses that are sent to the brain, and then in some strange way, the brain reassembles certain nerve impulses that come through the senses in some way and forms a world out of that, a reality.

Now, what relationship does that have with what's actually out there? We don't know. Nobody really knows whether there's actually anything out there or whether it is simply something that is being dreamt.

The brain creates its dream, or we share the same dream, but we don't want to degenerate now into philosophy. All I'm saying is you can doubt everything, including that the whole life up to now that you experienced as your life ever happened. It could be a dream too.

It's very similar to you wake up in the morning and sometimes just before you're completely awake, you remember the day before and you might think, was that the dream or did that happen? But everything in the past is of the nature of a dream that dissolves and then you say, was that real or did I dream that? When you arrive home after this retreat, you open your front door and then you put your luggage down and you look around and say, did I ever leave?

Did I dream all that? Because everything dissolves so quickly, it's in the nature of a dream. So you can doubt everything except one thing, that you are.

Because if you were not, the dream could not arise. The dream can only arise in the field of consciousness. There needs to be a consciousness that enables the dream to be, if it is a dream or that enables your life to be.

There needs to be a, some, a dreamer. A dream, when you wake up in the morning and you remember a dream and you say it's unreal or it's only a dream. Well, there must be something real in it.

The consciousness that enabled the dream to be, that was real. The light in which the dream appeared, which is the light of consciousness. And so your innermost, who you are, you can doubt on the level of form, everything, except that you are, there is beingness or presence there.

You don't know what you are, perhaps. You don't know what that is. But without it, nothing could be the light of consciousness.

I am. So that is the, I am that is hiding in the story. The story says, I am this, or I am that.

You identify with this, you identify with that. That's form. And you can doubt all that and it all passes very quickly.

But something that you cannot doubt is that you are. You may be dreaming all this, but you are. And you may not be able to name what you are or who you are, because in the moment you name it, you have given the formless form.

So can we remain as the formless sense of I am at this very moment to sense your beingness or presence that has nothing to do with your past? In fact, let's pretend for a moment that you have no past and no name, because it's ephemeral anyway. What is the name?

It's a sequence of sounds that your parents invented for you. And then you believed in it. So let's pretend for a moment that you have no past or you can't remember it, because if you don't remember it, it's gone anyway.

And you don't have a name and remain with a bare sense of being. And that is what underlies all the forms in your life. No name, no past, no future.

Do you know who you are? No. That's self-realization.

You have to become happy with not knowing who you are. So you enter the unknown dimension of yourself. All you know is that you are, but you don't know what or who you are.

Because if you think you know what or who you are, you've already limited yourself. You remain as consciousness. And even that's too much to say that, but I say it anyway.

Because if we call it something, we've already limited it. But as long as you're aware that it's only a pointer, I cannot explain it by saying consciousness. I cannot explain who you are by saying you are consciousness.

That would only be... It's only a pointer. Consciousness is only a name.

Somebody else calls it Tao, somebody else calls it something else. It is better to let that be nameless. Simply...

It is simply knowing that you are, but not knowing what or who you are. And not needing to escape immediately or again into knowing. And that's the great...

People find it hard to live with not knowing. They need... And this is why there's the compulsion to name as soon as an experience appears in front of you.

You need to name it. It's the mind that needs to feel secure by interpreting it and saying what it is. So...

And so we are becoming familiar here first, basically, with not knowing who we are. Because you cannot know yourself as an object of knowledge. Not the essence.

Because you are that through which everything is known. You are the knower itself, the very basis for knowing. And that you cannot make into an object.

And from the point of view of the mind, that sense of beingness or presence is a state of not knowing, of ignorance. But only from the point of view of the mind. But the mind and the egoic mind, that's associated with...

which is to do with mind identification, is afraid of that. It thinks you will lose yourself. But you don't.

And once you're comfortable with not knowing who you are, but simply realizing that you are, that is what we described earlier as the background to all your experiences and perceptions. The I am, which, if we want to describe it, to give you another pointer, it is a sense of spaciousness. Space also you cannot describe.

You cannot grasp. An inner spaciousness, the I am-ness, beingness, presence. So when you look at it, we talked this morning about sense perception, looking at a plant, a blade of grass, a tree, a landscape, the clouds, listening to the rain, listening to the birds, whatever it might be.

And knowing yourself as the background or the stillness, which is the same as the I am. One could say that's the another analogy. It's the screen on which the world of form temporarily appears.

So when people meditate, then they attempt to get to that realization, not through the

sense perceptions, which is another way. They attempt to get to that directly, to sense the presence that they are as consciousness. And here we are doing it with our eyes open while somebody is speaking.

It's not somebody, but there's a voice. And that's an enormously, even a glimpse of that gives you a sense of intense aliveness, because what you are getting a glimpse of, by the way, whenever we talk about it, we are distorting it and recreating a duality where there isn't one. You are not getting a glimpse of it.

It gets a glimpse of itself. You're getting a glimpse of it. There's a sense of aliveness, subtle, but strong.

It has nothing to do with the form, whether the form is 20 years old or 95 years old. It has nothing to do with that. Nothing to do with your achievements or non-achievements or what you have identified with.

Direct sense of aliveness, the joy of being, beingness. Everything else that people seek in the world of form is a substitute, because they haven't found that themselves there. They haven't found the life, what Jesus called eternal life.

They haven't found that, their innermost sense, the consciousness that they are, and that's obscured by forms. And so they look for more forms. They're looking for that, for themselves in the world of form.

And that's why living in this world, for most people, is such a frustrating experience. Because the world cannot give you what you are looking for, ultimately. And they don't even know that that is what they're looking for.

They think they're looking, when I have accumulated those forms, then I'll be full and complete, not realizing their very search for the fullness and completeness in the world of form is obscuring the fullness and completeness that's already there at this moment, as their very life, their very essence, their very consciousness, their very search for it obscures the reality of it now. The search for it in the future obscures the reality of it now. And so this is why, as I said this morning, sometimes when you obtain something that you thought would fulfill you, for a moment, it does seem to fulfill you.

If you thought your life would be fulfilled when you own your Rolls Royce, or whatever it is, or the mansion, or finally appear on the front page of People magazine, then for a moment, when you see your picture on the front page of People magazine, you will feel you have arrived and that you might feel joy. And that's because for a moment, you're not looking for something more in the future to add to the search for more forms to find yourself through, has for a moment subsided. And there you are.

And that won't last long because if you open People magazine and start to read what they write about you, you will soon come down from that state. Because it will be

completely distorted. They will have created an image.

First they build somebody up and then they enjoy tearing them down. That's how it works. And that's why people love reading it because their emotions get stimulated by it.

It's another substitute for the true feeling of aliveness. It's another substitute for their true being, their true reality. And so a large part of our civilization is there to provide people with substitutes to give them a second or third hand sense of aliveness, of beingness, of who they are through this and through that stimulus.

It starts when young children and we become more and more clever at devising stimulus because people, there's more and more demand for stimulus because the restlessness and the discontent and the unhappiness are growing. And so they said, okay, we must find something. All these children are unhappy.

We must give them video games to keep them busy and give them stimulus. So they, at a young age, they get already addicted to that input. And it gives them, it's a drug.

It gives them a, it's a substitute feeling of aliveness. The moment they stop playing, they become restless again and the body twitches and then they go to the TV. That's the, this is what our civilization has come to.

Loss of forgetfulness, we could say, of being. There cannot be loss of being because the essence of who you are cannot be lost, but we could call it forgetfulness of being. And then large part of the civilization is engaged in finding substitutes, substitute stimulus, drugs, things, proliferation of things in this world.

Promises that through this or through that, you will feel better, you will be more, more complete. You will define your identity through this or that possession. And people unconsciously buy it.

They buy it in both senses of the word. Entertainment, industry. A lot of it is violent, so it feeds the emotion, the old emotion, the pain body.

Substitutes. So here freedom is only in finding that which everybody is seeking in the wrong place, future. That everybody is seeking through some form.

The formless through some form. And it's right here. Of course you will function differently when that becomes a living reality in your life, which we could call, which we could call the feeling of yourself, the sense of your very being.

We could call the space in the background, the stillness within, all the same thing, the same normal thing. Of course, how you conduct your life will be different when you are connected with that dimension. You have one foot in that dimension, the other foot in this dimension.

And in any situation, there's a question. And here's another pointer. We had, I'm never upset for the reason I think.

We had, what's my relationship with this moment? And another pointer now, is there space in my perception or my relationship or in what I'm doing at this moment? Is there space?

What does that mean? We already have touched upon this when we look at something. The space, the still space, is the background to the looking and to sense that as yourself while you look.

The form, and the formless, that is the light of consciousness itself. And now to sense the still background that you are is very subtle at first, because the mind may look for it and you can't find it like that. It's in the background as a simple nothingness.

That's why the Buddhists call it emptiness. It's perceived from the point of view of mind and form as the nothingness in the background, the no-thing-ness in the background. That's always the same.

In everyone, even in the most insane person, the no-thing-ness is there in the background. It cannot be destroyed in the same way that the space in this room cannot be destroyed, no matter what you do to this room. You cannot destroy the essence of this room, which is space.

You can destroy the walls, but you can make a lot of noise in here. And yet at some point, you'll have to stop making noise and the stillness and spaciousness of this room is immediately there again. So it's always, don't think you have lost it, or too much has happened in my life, I've done too many bad things.

It cannot be, can neither be destroyed nor marred in any way the essence of your being. But it is from the point of view of this gross material reality and even gross mental and emotional reality, from that point of view, it is elusive, subtle, can never grasp it. And yet it's always there in the background as the stillness.

And it's there when you look at a plant and you can sense there's a stillness looking. It's not me as a person looking at a plant when there's no thought movement, there's simply a field of stillness against which the perception of the plant arises. And it may sometimes happen that you sense, I'm not just talking now, as I talk, you can actually sense that.

It may sometimes happen that that sense of stillness against which a sense perception happens, you feel that much more strongly than the sense perception itself. It is almost, it can happen that the sense perception recedes, becomes, well, even although it may be very beautiful, the beingness can be very beautiful. It can be so overwhelming that all sense perceptions become surface phenomena, ripples on the surface of being, because the vastness of stillness that you are is so great that the entire world of form is no more

than that, ripples.

Imagine being being a ball, it's not because it has no shape, and there's a stillness pervading the entire sphere, but on the external surface of the sphere, there's a ripple movement continuously changing. That's the world of form. And in the depths of the sphere, there's the eternal timeless stillness.

And so, most people are lost on the surface of things. It's the world, we call it the world, Jesus calls it the world. They are lost in the world, which is the surface layer of reality, we could say.

And that's all there is. And then life becomes dramatic and frustrating. And ultimately, are very unfulfilling.

So much that you want to get out, not realizing that you really want to get in. So when you look at a landscape, a tree, a flower, the flame of a candle, whatever it may be, you may sense sometimes that we talked about it in terms of two dimensions, you may sense that the dimension of stillness becomes so vast that what you are looking at or what you're listening to is relatively insignificant. It's just a little ripple.

And then you may sometimes want to close your eyes and be more completely one with that. But it's not yet time to completely disappear or merge with it, because for a while, we are here with a physical body, what looks like a physical body. And we are here meant to be a bridge between the world of form and the formless.

So the question is vital, not only in your sense perceptions, space, is there space? Where's the space? Can I sense the space?

It's a little pointer. And then that's the I am. It is vital in any activity that you do.

Now, so far, we've spoken about it in terms of what we could call passive perception, listening, seeing, touching, smelling. But it is vital in any activity, because that is something people not only lose themselves in sense perceptions, they lose themselves even more in doing, in what they do. So in any activity, whether it's a manual activity, then it's easier to stay present.

If it's manual, easier to have a sense of beingness and presence while the movement happens. And if that is there, then the manual activity, whatever you may be doing, crafting something, doing gardening, some artistic creation that you do with your hands, anyway it may be. And there, if you have the two dimensions, then whatever you are creating, whatever activity it is that you're engaged in, will reflect that dimension.

If you are in touch with it while you do, while there's a spaciousness, there's not, there's only little thought, there's simply aware presence that flows into the doing. Then whatever you're producing is of high quality. Not only the end product is of high quality,

the doing itself is of high quality.

And if somebody watches you, they will want to watch you more, because it is beautiful to watch somebody being engaged in an activity that is not a means to an end, where the mind has created a future end that it wants to get to. And in the meantime, it's just the activity is complete in itself. It's not a means to something in the future.

It's this tremendous enjoyment in the doing when there's the space is there with the doing. But many things in this world do not involve manual things. You are involved in abstract, in an abstract world, mental abstractions.

Consisting of computers, of telephones, of letters, and documents, and papers, and screens, and devices, gadgets, all abstract things that stimulate the mind that were created by the mind and stimulate the mind. And it seems you can only run them if you use your mind. Can only operate these gadgets if you use your mind.

And to some extent that is true. I have remained to this day computer illiterate. Now, if I truly had to, I would learn it and surrender to it so that perhaps could even enjoy it.

But I'm not going to try. I prefer the pen and paper for writing. It's more tactile, more immediate, and it seems to work.

So in any activity, you need to say, is there space in what I do? The loss of spaciousness is the worst thing that can happen to you no matter what kind of activity you are involved in. And it is the most common thing for people to lose that.

The entire civilization, one could almost say, has lost it. People are so obsessed with the doing that all sense of spaciousness is lost. So the world pulls them in.

Whatever they are doing pulls them in completely. And they always need to look to the next thing or the end of it that they haven't reached yet but they want and need to reach. I need to get to the end of that because there's another thing waiting for me that I have to do also.

The loss of spaciousness in doing. And so that needs to be regained. Once you know what spaciousness is, you have glimpsed it, you have glanced it, you have experienced spaciousness here, or many of you already have it in your life, and now it's a question of not just having it while you look at a beautiful tree, it's relatively easy, but having it while you are engaged in any kind of doing.

Mechanical, whatever it may be. Is there standing back and observing what it is that you are doing so there is still a background of spaciousness, although you may be, I sometimes describe in this world, you need to, everybody's in a hurry for some reason, that's the civilization that we have created. And there's always little time to do whatever you have to do, it seems.

Even with me, the publisher says, we need a quote for this, but it needs to be in by tomorrow evening. Can you write a testimonial for that, but we need it at maximum two days, it's going to print day after tomorrow. This always seems to be, I don't know why, and there's always the time, there's very little time.

Okay. And then you sit down and then the testimonial is a piece of paper. If it comes, it comes.

First you enter spaciousness, become still, present, pick up a pen, and then something may come or it may not come. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't. But I refuse to be driven mad by the world, and this means some things get done and others don't get done.

And the world does not collapse when some things don't get done. It's better to do a few things with high quality than many things low quality. And if they sack you because you're now producing few high quality things and not many low quality things, then that's for the best.

Or it may be that you, that others see how you work and then they catch it and they also start doing it the same way. A constant alertness to see have I lost the space? This is really another version of asking have I lost the present moment?

Which really means have I lost awareness of the present moment? And what is awareness of the present moment other than awareness of the underlying stillness? The I am-ness.

Because awareness of the present moment is not awareness of what happens in the present moment. That comes, that's a surface phenomenon. But that's indirect awareness of the present moment.

That's awareness of the form of the present moment. But awareness of the present moment itself is spaciousness. Is awareness of the underlying stillness in any moment no matter what happens.

And that is so the question is there space in what I do? Or have I lost the space? It's the same as asking have I lost the present moment?

Because the present moment is that. Is the space in which everything happens. Is the background.

Is the stillness. Is who you are in your essence. And the question have I lost it is not an absolutely correct question because you cannot lose it but it simply points to the fact that it has become obscured.

But let's just put it that way. Have I lost it? Have I lost and the moment you have lost it

or think you have lost it there's the opportunity the opening for re-entering the space.

And that is a little skill that you can acquire here if you have not acquired it already. The skill of re-entering presence, spaciousness when you notice that you lost it, lost in quotation marks. The re-entering, the possibility of re-entering spaciousness the moment you realize it's gone.

That realization is already the re-entry of spaciousness but if you don't know that the mind will immediately come in and form a judgment. Out of that realization it will make a judgment and say you lost it not realizing. How do you know that you lost it?

Because you just realized that you lost it and that realization is presence. But the mind uses that realization and misuses it for its own ends and makes a mental judgment out of it and say you see you lost it again what's the point in doing it? Or whatever the mind says.

So to realize the moment you know that you lost it that knowing is the re-emergence of it because if you had truly lost it you wouldn't know it you would be completely immersed in the unconscious movement the unconscious thinking the unconscious activity the unconscious reaction. So to know that you lost the present moment it is there in the knowing is the awakening already. And then you stay in the knowing and that is the state of alertness that is suddenly back and you suddenly feel the inner body again.

And the first thing as I mentioned earlier the first thing that you often notice is your surroundings again sense perceptions. Ah, ah, space is back. And then you go into you continue doing what you're doing with a sense of space.

Now, the place where you most easily lose it is when the mind is active and especially when the mind is interacting with other minds. Talking, discussing something. That's where you most easily get completely drawn into thought forms.

Your consciousness gets totally drawn into thought forms and you are totally in every thought and so you can observe it when you watch maybe not here because perhaps everybody's present now but when you watch two people talking to each other or just listen to two people talking to each other you can also often notice that lack of presence that lack of space in the interaction. Well, and then you said I really think that wasn't quite the right thing. Well, no, you're not quite it's just forms one form after another.

There's never a not a standing back from the mind stream. It's being immersed in the mind stream and that's so seductive. And especially when you're dealing with something that the world calls a problem we need to deal with this this is so important what are you going to do about this?

That's how the world functions one problem after another. So then to lose yourself not

only in the mind stream but to lose yourself in whatever the world says matters this thing is so important we have to get sort this out. What do we do?

And you get everybody's frustrated and there's thinking and everybody's it's so important no sense of space between it and yourself you are not there really as the space. You get absorbed by the problem you get absorbed by the activity you get absorbed by the mind stream and then you suddenly you notice oh and there's a waking up again I lost the space. And then the space is back and you stand back and for a moment you don't participate in the interaction the discussion whatever it is and suddenly immediately there's a different energy field there and if you then start speaking again the words will not feed the mind they may be words but the words then come out of presence and it may be that for the first time somebody says something sensible for the first time somebody presents a real solution to the situation and that is the world is the world has two aspects the world in your head and the world out there which is I don't mean nature by world I mean the civilization that the mind has created so you have the inner world and the outer world which are really one the whole civilization almost everything is mind creation very little in it contains presence occasionally here and there there are certain things yes but it's rare so the world has incredible momentum the world in here primarily and the world out there but primarily of course in here and everything it's easy to lose yourself in that because of the pulling power of the mind the inner mind and the externalized mind as the world and the world will it's not only that the world wants to pull you in every other mind every human who is only there as a mind wants you to contribute to his or her mind stream and wants to convince you that this really matters this is very important whenever you think something matters absolutely in this world you have lost space whenever you behave as if something was deadly serious and mattered absolutely and for some people it can be the tiniest thing just even getting the right the right buying the right kind of thing in a store i got that he told me the wrong kind of what does it matter and you see what people get upset about absurd things completely irrelevant and unimportant and they say it matters they believe it matters it's completely meaningless in the larger scheme and the larger scheme can only be seen from the perspective of space so the tiniest thing people lose themselves in and get upset and angry about and tell others about and yet you might ask yeah but what about the big things because sometimes big things go wrong in this world there can be somebody close to you may suddenly die or die prematurely you may suddenly experience great loss something may suddenly go drastically wrong in your life and there's no human life in which this does not ever happen it all happens to everyone sooner or later things go wrong and even there yes of course you weep when someone close to you dies you may feel sad when somebody leaves you because it's a kind of death or your business empire collapses 30 years of work down the drain says the mind it's just a thought not a reality yes a form collapses as they do all the time and they may well be weeping you may find yourself weeping but if you know if you're in touch with the life that is beyond form at a deeper level there's

also a peace and that will be there particularly once you already have touched space spaciousness or as i sometimes call it space consciousness the rest is object consciousness then if something in the world of form including physical forms human forms suddenly dissolves dies leaves you there is you as the form identity may feel sad and may weep because one aspect of you a small one is form the physical form and the psychological form of me and the the depths of yourself you will feel that more strongly the peace will be stronger that is underneath the weeping for those who have already who are in touch with that dimension within when great loss happens to you and so that really means nothing in this world which is the world of forms matters absolutely because every form of course is destined to dissolve sooner or later and nobody can predict you cannot have a business contract that says if i do the right things then my form is going to survive for a hundred years doesn't work every form is destined to dissolve sooner or later and the question is are you in touch with the deathless dimension in yourself the formless deathless dimension deathless is a term the buddhists sometimes use the deathless realm buddhists like to use negative terms they don't like to give some buddhist schools do also have positive terms but originally the whole of buddhism is expressed in negative terms so that you don't substitute mental idols for the actual reality so buddhism does not talk about eternal life like jesus did but they point to the same thing it speaks of the deathless realm amarabhati the realm of the deathless and that is exactly what we are pointing to here and isn't it amazing that that begins with looking at a flower in stillness that is the beginning of the arising of the timeless and deathless and formless dimension of who you are when you are in touch with that even what the world calls dreadful disaster yes you may weep on the surface where you also are a form temporarily will i'm not saying will not touch you in the depths of your being it will touch you but very differently it will touch you in the sense that the peace that you feel will only be stronger when things around you collapse that's i experienced that many years ago for the first time and i couldn't understand it when things went wrong in my life the peace was stronger i said that doesn't make sense i just lost that and the peace is more is deeper it's almost like something within that to compensate for the the loss of a form the formless was shining even more so that begins with spacious perception the next step is spacious doing the next step is spacious interaction with other humans and then meeting the world and whatever the world demands with the sense of space so that it doesn't draw you in completely and realize only one thing matters absolutely and that's not a thing everything else is in the realm of the relative it matters relatively but not absolutely absolutely exactly the same truth jesus expressed in the famous parable of martha and mary two sisters he was visiting two sisters martha was busy about the house cooking and cleaning and preparing the meal for jesus and getting used to get this so much to do before lunch is ready got so much and mary was listening to jesus sitting at his feet looking into his face and going and martha said come on jesus tell her we've got things we need to get on with things here we have so much to do tell her to help me i can't do it all by myself i'm going mad here and jesus said martha martha you are worried about many things but only one

thing is needful and she has chosen that one thing now modern theologians are not very happy with that they try to reinterpret it in some way he didn't really mean that now is he saying we should never it's not saying we should never do anything anymore but get a sense of perspective and see what really matters and that choose that first and if then the lunch is not ready on time so be it but it may be ready too but nothing matters more than finding yourself which is one with finding god a word i rarely use because of its misuse nothing matters more and so if things don't get done they don't get done and then after a while you you can you see you can there's a balance you can do things beautifully without losing touch with being with presence teaching used to be enjoyable and nowadays at universities and schools many teachers say the administrative work and the burden of that is is is almost impossible to carry and so see what is primary and that is presence you choose that first uncompromising and uncompromisingly so that you don't get seduced into believing that something in this world matters more that something in this world matters absolutely nothing matters absolutely except finding yourself and then you do what you can in some cases the world around you will catch on if you start living in a different way some other people may become interested and may watch you and may ask questions or just your presence may be enough to change an environment that's sometimes possible the presence of one conscious person can sometimes change an unconscious environment in other instances if the unconsciousness is too heavy too deeply entrenched that may not be possible and then there will be a separation you will separate yourself from that unconscious energy field or they may want you to leave anyway as we said in the joke that I mentioned you will get the sack because you're not suffering from a stress-related disease space vital use that here while you interact with people space in an interaction means first of all the ability to be there as spacious presence while you listen that means the words of the other person are being received in a field of alert stillness that's how you do not how not to get drawn into the mind level of that vibrational frequency of mind because the mind wants you to join it the other person's mind will attempt you your mind to draw it out and to join it so that they can unite and reinforce each other mutually on that level of frequency of mind so the mind come on surely you must have an opinion about this don't you think that was a dreadful thing I thought it was absolutely what about you well can you listen even to somebody who wants you to an emotion maybe part of it too often the ego is a mixture of mind and emotion an entity a mental emotional entity come on and to be able to listen in spacious presence now that requires a high degree of alertness on your part not alertness has nothing to do with tension of course alertness is free of tension it is relaxed remember buddha and clint eastwood together in one it's that you but if you are not alert then you will lose yourself in that person's mind stream and join it with your mind stream so the person is speaking or they may just be making some innocent remarks but even there while the person speaks the ability to listen not to listen as a mind or to listen as a person but to listen as spacious presence to be there as spacious presence for the other person so the words are being received nothing now it means you are not mentally seeking anymore to either agree or disagree with that

person because that's usually what the mind does it will immediately say yeah you're absolutely right there they should do something about it or the mind says no you're completely wrong you're just absolutely you don't understand this at all let me tell you how it is so you either the mind usually looks for either a dissent i think is the word or assent either wants to agree or disagree and here you neither agree nor disagree nor are you preparing the next thing that you're going to say if ever you prepare mentally the next thing that you are going to say whatever it is that you're going to say will only function on the level of mind and it will be uninspiring it will be of low quality only that which comes out of your mouth and i'm not saying it's an emotion that suddenly bursts out because that's possible too no if it comes out of presence out of first there's the stillness and then that person speaks and then that person stops perhaps if you're lucky and says now what do you think and at that moment you're not thinking anything yet and then there's a moment of stillness perhaps but it may not be long the other person may not even notice that it's stillness and then some words will come out of your mouth there's no nobody can predict what will come out but it will be more vitally true than anything that the mind could say and it's possible that the words that come out of your mouth are i don't really know to be comfortable with not knowing not to prepare mentally the next statement the next objection the next question the next clever thing that's coming out of your mouth but to simply be there as spacious stillness and if three people are talking it's even more important and that's even more seductive or four people being in the body helps feeling the inner body as you listen i learned that lesson at my first public talk i ever gave many years ago i met somebody in london where i was living at some dinner and he said i work for the theosophical society i just spoke to him for 10 minutes he didn't know anything about me well nobody did and i didn't either and he said can you come and give a talk to our theosophical society we need people like you the first time anybody ever asked me to give a talk and i said okay what shall i talk about he said you just find a title it doesn't matter and then let me know and then i'll in three months time you can come and give the talk so when the time came close to the talk one morning i woke up and my mind said you better prepare something i already knew that to speak the truth that must come from presence not from anything that is prepared and yet my mind convinced me that i need to prepare something so i got a piece of paper at least i already knew that writing a whole script that would not be possible but i had a piece of paper not big with all the points 10 points that i thought needed to be mentioned to make the talk complete one to ten and so i arrived there may be 30 or 40 people were there and he said here is Eckhart he's going to talk about i can't remember what the title was spirit yes spiritual dimensions in psychotherapy they liked a complicated title and i already knew the first two points that i wanted to talk about by heart so the piece of paper was there started to talk and everybody was it was a presence was beginning to fill the room everybody entered presence and i came to the end of point two and then the mind said now have a look at i picked up and the moment my i looked at the paper and read now point three i could feel the entire energy field in the room going they'd all left me they'd all come back into their little minds and i had

gone back into mine and when i looked up again i saw two people were looking at their watches and then i started to talk about point three and presence returned and then i'd come to the end of point three and then it happened one or two more times it took me a while to learn i looked collapsed energy field collapsed and that was the last time i ever used a piece of paper in a talk and i realize now even if i had forgotten five or six out of the ten points even if i'd only mentioned the first two points and couldn't remember anything else it would not have mattered because the essence of any true talk is not in the words the essence is in the space out of which the words come the rest you can go to universities for that's okay it's that's what matters and even at university i experienced it once when a lecturer the only one who spoke spontaneously who didn't have notes that they'd used for 10 or 15 years read the same lecture notes there was one lecturer who spoke you just opened a work of literature or poetry and he would look and then spontaneously talk never had any notes that was at the university i was taught in london few years later i was at another university where he got invited as a guest speaker and he had come with notes i had told everybody he's great you must listen to him and when he got up he had a pile of notes and every time he read partly and 75 percent of his talk he read from notes and everybody was okay and 25 percent occasionally he looked away from the notes and started to speak ah that was fresh that was new that was alive and it wasn't in the words the words were there yes they had a certain significance but where there was something present in the room beyond the words that was that would make the talk vitally alive and so after the talk we went to a pub and i asked him why did you bring notes he said well i thought that was it it was cambridge here and they expected something more than just so it's very rare at university to find that dimension extremely rare a few geniuses there who miraculously survive within that structure yes but mostly it's it all the entire thing is mind and therefore there's it is not a place universities are not usually places that that are where you feel true aliveness they are dense energy fields of some more than others but here and there they're always they're managed just as in medieval times you had a few great mystics teachers who miraculously survived within the catholic church that somehow they were tolerated or they hadn't discovered yet what they were really talking about and they miraculously survived within that structure and so even at universities there's some alive beautiful beings who miraculously survive within that otherwise totally mind-dominated structure so the ability to speak from presence not to prepare the next thing that you're going to say and that is to speak from space is there space in this interaction no relationship can thrive without space that's the most vital ingredient in any relationship and space is the formless dimension of who you are the stillness is there stillness is another question is there stillness in this relationship and stillness is to be able to listen in stillness to be able to look at your partner in stillness the wind is sweeping away all the old mind structures we had a retreat here four years ago and on the last night there was a violent storm several tents collapsed and the roofs the tiles got blown off the building i'm not predicting anything you may remember the jesus saying truly i tell you whenever he says truly i tell you in the old translation it says verily i tell

you whenever jesus says truly i tell you he's saying now listen up unless you become like little children you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven so in many ways living in presence is like living like it's living like a little child there's a sense of openness of wonder of all of continuous newness the only difference is when presence arises in an adult human there is the same openness that you have in a child in whom the mind has not taken over yet with an added dimension of knowing of depth not only are you in touch with that dimension you know that you are in touch with that dimension without formulating any thought you just know it there's a knowing that has nothing to do with concepts and that knowing will play an increasingly important part in your life and gradually substitute the conceptual knowing that people think they need they cannot live without it will gradually substitute that in non-conceptual knowing and that already is there when you look at a plant you know that it is a plant but you're not limiting this life being to that by imposing the label plant on it you also you leave untouched the mystery the unfathomable dimension of every life form you don't fall into the error that you can explain the mystery that is hiding in each life form that can never be known through any mental concept but can be known as a reflection of the essence of who you are so the mind is to a large extent a pseudo-knowledge it believes that you know the moment you've called it something nothing, you don't know anything if you call it something you just have given it a label or a sound you've attached a sound to it it's such and such a plant now you think you know nothing it remains as mysterious as before except now you have the illusion that you know what it is the world is a complete mystery and it should remain a complete mystery that's the beauty of it it cannot ultimately be known conceptually it can only be known yes, as a reflection of your very being and yet even there that remains a mystery the modern world has lost all sense of sacredness because sacredness and mystery are intimately connected holiness or sacredness when the mind labels everything there's no sacredness left because there's only pseudo-knowledge left sacredness is there the moment there is space and that's why you go into certain places that are considered sacred where people who are attuned to it can still feel something and it's always there is great spaciousness in those places there's always a sense of space whether it's a temple or a cathedral an ancient cathedral and preferably you go in when they're not doing something in there when there's just the empty space there's sacredness or certain in nature there's the space between two hills or the space of a cave a sense of there's always there's no sacredness without space and the primary realm of the sacred is your own self the space that you are there goes a thought and that's fine an externalized thought noisy smelly again to remind you tonight when you are in bed lie in on your back and go into the body go into sleep from inner body awareness when you wake up go back into the body rest in there so that the mind doesn't immediately take over and then all the little things here sense perceptions hearing seeing maybe smelling occasionally touching doing little doings bring presence into little doings walking one step at a time no need to arrive at the last step you'll get there anyway at the moment you're at this step this is the step you're taking doing little things hand lifting a cup of coffee a cup of tea juice just presence with the movement so

that presence flows into what you do it's not a means to an end it's simply the moment of drinking isn't better than the moment of reaching for the glass or the moment of the glass traveling to the lips it's good can this movement happen against a backdrop of space in other words can you lift the glass and put it back without the interference of thought simply alert stillness so any movement you can do like that is it possible to perform this little you have to find out for yourself can you perform this movement in spaciousness put this from here to there how long does that take to put something from here to there it takes about three seconds but that doesn't matter it's three seconds of presence and no thought just alert presence that's a little spiritual practice i don't think anybody i don't know if anybody's ever suggested that you pick up a little thing and put it from here to there space and that's not asking a lot but it's an enormous thing because what comes into your life then is space it's thoughtless presence alertness the ability to do things without the interference of thought but not unconsciously with great consciousness but without the interference of thought so walking from here to there don't make it a very long distance don't say okay i'm now going to attempt half a mile without thought it's enough between here and the next tree every step i'll just be present with every step and okay then you're there you can then try in the next tree or forget about it

[Speaker 2] (5:46:10 - 5:46:12)

and then you say

[Speaker 1] (5:46:13 - 5:49:55)

i've forgotten what my problems are we will have a communal silence probably starting tomorrow evening and go on until wednesday morning tomorrow evening that's monday evening until wednesday morning i will suggest that we be silent together and particularly at that time many things you can practice like that because nobody's going to interfere and ask you questions or tell you their opinions or if they do will you tell them to quiet we're talking about movement there's there will be movement classes apart from the yoga classes that you have in the morning those who feel awake enough early in the morning can go to yoga if that's the kind of movement your body likes or holding and kim is doing movement classes the first one after this after sitting for a long time it may be helpful i believe it's not outside today but in the lila lila hall lila is the indian language for divine play in the lila hall so you can move the body there and here's exactly what we were talking about to bring presence into movement i talked about little movements that you may do in your everyday life and then there's also the possibility of being present with any kind of movement it could be a spontaneous movement or it could be a movement that you have learned as in tai chi where you move you move just one movement while this arm moves from here to there to move it to be a high quality movement you need to be present and not wanting to be there while you're still here and not being here while you're already there with your mind to just be there at every

moment so you cannot do movement well if you're not thinking you have to be present so movement can be a great help for the arising of presence and beautiful when you listen to that wind can you sense the stillness underneath it the listening presence that you are being and that's a beautiful contrast because in a way wind just seems the opposite of stillness it's enormous movement and yet it's happening against the background of stillness

[Speaker 2] (5:52:22 - 5:56:17)

um Om Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Om Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Om Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate Namo Bhagavate

[Speaker 1] (5:56:41 - 6:35:52)

Somebody once asked me, why are you quiet before you, why do you wait for so long before you start speaking?

And the true answer of course is because I don't know what to say. Now that could be very uncomfortable. If I thought that I should know what to say, that would be a nightmare.

And some people have these nightmares. You dream that you sit somewhere and suddenly the curtain opens and you're in front of a large audience and you don't know what to say. But it's only a nightmare because you think you should know what to say.

If you were comfortable with not knowing what to say, it would be fine. So there are two states of not knowing. One is not knowing and thinking that you should know.

And the other is not knowing and being at ease with not knowing. Then the not knowing is actually a very deep state of knowing, but not conceptual. But it's covered up as long as you think that you should know or trying to know or trying to figure out or interpret.

Or you should know what the next moment, what's going to happen the next moment. So by thinking that you should know or by attempting to project yourself to the next moment, you cover up the depth that's in you that we could call not knowing, but that really is simply non-conceptual intelligence, formless intelligence, primordial intelligence. It's not something we can measure.

Sometimes people think they can measure intelligence, but all they can measure is form, thought form, solving little problems or puzzles, which is a tiny fraction of true intelligence. To be comfortable with not knowing in a conceptual sense is part of living in the state of presence. And it's not only when you're in front of an audience, because you may or may not be, but also be comfortable with not needing to interpret the situation or another person.

As the old 60s Beatles song went, Let it be. There it is, Let it be. Why have to figure out what it is?

Why? Of course, because the ego feels better. It feels it.

It has control over life. If you can figure it out, interpret it, judge it, then the ego feels it's in control. It's not.

It's an illusion. And the more the ego feels in control, the more deeply you're immersed in dream and illusion. And then comes a point, after a few years of doing that, and you inhabit your own conditioned, illusory reality.

And that you experience then as the world. And what you react to is then not actual situations, but your view, your interpretation of the situations. And then you recreate the same thing.

It's a vicious circle. I could talk about it a long time. But this is essential that you feel at home with leaving things alone, leaving people alone.

That's a great gift. The greatest gift is to leave them alone. When the ego says, Yeah, but I need to protect myself.

Who knows what he wants from me? There is a knowing that's not conceptual. And you'll find yourself doing the right thing, saying the right thing.

You know, as the Buddhist thing goes, I can't remember all the, right action, right speech, right this, right that. And I love Buddhists. I mean, Buddhism.

I think they start from up there. You cannot generate right speech, right action, and so on, without being in the right state of consciousness. It flows out of the state of presence naturally.

As long as you're not present, you can try hard to practice right speech and right this and right that, but it's hard, and many times you won't get it right. So I don't believe the Buddha ever said you should start up there. I'm sure he said start with the foundation.

And he didn't explain all that much conceptually. That came later. He might have said be in the body, or said take a conscious breath, observe your breath, or something like that, which of course means stop thinking.

You can't observe your breath and think at the same time. If you think, you either think or you observe your breath. That's another way of space arising, space, observing your breath.

You can do it as a meditation where you sit down and light a candle and light the incense, or you can observe your breath at any time, at any moment, just one breath at

a time. Brings in a space into your life. One breath at a time.

And observing simply means following it with your attention, feeling it, sensing it as it enters the body, the air enters the body, and even noticing the tiny gap when the in-breath has come to an end, and then observing the breath as it leaves the body, and even being conscious of the tiny gap after the out-breath has come to an end. And that's a very simple thing, but it requires alertness, and it brings in space. So it's just that one little thing which is also closely related to being in the body, because as you observe the breath, it takes you into the body.

So almost without wanting to, you begin also to feel the body at the same time. It takes you out of mind. It creates space.

And it doesn't matter. It would be more helpful to remember 50 times during the day to take one conscious breath than to sit for very long periods in meditation, bring it into normal living, just one breath at a time, or if you can, maybe two. But people say, I haven't got time for meditation.

That's fine. Then don't meditate. Just take conscious breaths during the day.

Have little reminders next to your computer, in the bathroom, or wherever. Just take one conscious breath. And there's nobody in this world who does not have time for one conscious breath.

And then people might say, yeah, but 50 during the day? And that is space arising. Spaciousness.

Just that. And then out, that is presence. And then out of presence comes right speech, or no speech.

Could be even better, many times. Unnecessary speech drops away. Also arises right action, if it's needed.

And unnecessary action drops away. A lot of the action generated by egoic consciousness is unnecessary. They're all running around like mad.

But of course, some action is necessary. And then you'll know the difference. Becoming acquainted with space consciousness, which is not from science fiction, but it's to do with inner space.

We call it inner, but ultimately everything is inner. The whole world is inner. That is an inner phenomenon, because where else does the world arise?

So you could say there's nothing that is not inner. There was one Zen master, little known. One of his ways was he would call a disciple in the monastery, he would call their name when they were nearby, as if something very urgent was happening.

He said, John! Yes, master. And then they looked at him and he didn't say anything.

And so the new monks or nuns, and some of the old ones too, they tried to figure out, he's trying to tell me something. What's he trying to tell me? He's not trying to tell you anything.

The interesting thing is it's not about content. These disciples or monks, they expected content to come from the master. And all the master pointed to was space.

Content doesn't matter to him. He's got nothing to say. What can he put in there?

All he's interested in is space, not content. So all the master wants is your attention, your wakefulness, your alertness, your spacious awareness. He doesn't want to fill it with anything.

And that's such a shift when you shift from a life, a content-based life, which is normal, and normal equals insane, as we know, content-based life. Almost everybody lives a content-based life, a life entirely dominated by content, their situation, the so-called external content, the things they, that start with physical objects that they own or that are in their life that they have to worry about. That's physical thingness, content.

Content is then the situations that arise, the relationships, the problems that arise, life situation. Content is your own body and your concerns about that, other people that you meet, your work, your financial situation, the drama, whatever. All that is the content of your life on the external level that absorbs people's attention and for most people the entire attention is in the content of their lives, what's going on in my life.

And then there comes the inner content with thoughts one after another. Ultimately, of course, it's all inner, but just for the time being we divide it into outer and inner. The thoughts which they are identified with and which are related, of course, to the life situation and so on.

And then there come the emotions, both the emotions that are generated now by egoic thinking and the emotions that have lived in you for a long time, accumulated from the past, pain from childhood, pain from the more distant collective past of humanity that comes up periodically. We may talk about that in a little bit more detail, but for the time being just to see all that is content and that absorbs people's consciousness virtually a hundred percent, their thoughts, their emotions and the things that are going on in their lives. And that's how there's nothing else, a content-based existence.

And then comes the realization that there is another dimension without which content would not even be possible. There wouldn't be no content just in the same way we couldn't put any furniture or bodies in this room if there were no space here. But it's easy to forget that the essence of this room is space and it's easy to forget that the essence of yourself is equally space, the space of consciousness.

But that space is so crammed full with content that you can't see it anymore, you can't sense it. So it's almost as if content obliterated space in people's lives and then it's life becomes a burden and then what they try is they try to rearrange the content of their lives in such a way that finally their life works. But a content-based life cannot work because the most vital essence, the very aliveness of life, is missing.

The essence, which is space, which is not content, which is not form, the formless essence of all life, life itself, is missing. And then no matter how you rearrange the content and some people are obsessed with rearranging the content of their lives, they think just a different configuration of furniture will change everything. Furniture meaning content.

And it doesn't. Many times you might think, okay, now I've made it, that's it. New relationship, new place to live, new job, new climate, everything is perfect now.

And it's not. And soon you find out, well, that wasn't supposed to be here. And that is what the Buddha says, means, when he talks about dukkha, suffering, which can also be translated as just plain misery.

And so he said, wherever you go, whatever you do, you will encounter suffering. Misery. Or it can also be translated as unsatisfactoriness.

Not quite fulfilling. Not quite it. So it's the degrees of dukkha.

Just unease is already dukkha. Irritation is already dukkha. And then it gets more.

And so he was talking about a content-based existence. And so primary is not rearranging the content of your life, but finding that which lies beyond content. And to do that, you don't need time or future.

And you don't need to have the content of your life in a particular way so that finally you have time to find. You don't need time. I need time to find myself.

I can't do it. Not here. I need more space.

I can't share a room with three people. I need space. I wish I had stayed home.

I could have done better meditations at home. I could have done my own retreat at home. And then I had to wait for the bathroom.

That's all. These are not ideal conditions. I can't practice in them.

Observe your thoughts. Don't believe in them. The best place to start, the only place to start, with finding space is at the very conditions of this moment.

The three people in the room, one of them snores, waiting for the bathroom, and then

observe the thought that comes in and says, I can't do it. I need space, my own private space. And observe that as a thought and let it be.

Then the thought doesn't grip you anymore. It doesn't have that hold on you where your whole sense of self is in that thought and you actually 100% believe in what that thought, which is a thought form, which is content, says. So the thought form, the content says, I can't find the space now.

Of course it says that because it is form. It wants to be there as form. Every life form wants to persist in that form.

It has a certain momentum, including thoughts. So it's only by observing the thought and then saying, okay, why believe in it? I can't, I need more space.

The thought comes and goes. You allow it and in that moment you have the space. Or you have a reaction, emotional that goes perhaps with the thought.

And then you observe that. You step, oh. And you also allow it.

Okay. And there's the space. The moment you allow something, there's space.

You step back out of it. We could call that consciousness disidentifies from form. You step out of a thought or an emotion.

You don't deny it. You don't push it down. You don't repress it.

You simply step. You were in it and then you step out. And really what's happening is on a cosmic level we could almost say you look like a person but you're not a person.

It's just a temporary appearance. Consciousness disidentifies from form or another way of putting it it's the end of the dream that consciousness dreamt. The dream of forms steps out and realizes itself as space.

So it's always there. The thoughts will come in and then you simply allow the thought to be there and especially there may be we talked yesterday about the possibility perhaps of simply being so alert that thoughts don't come in anymore only as little fragments. Some of you may be able to do it or you may be able to do it for short periods of time that just depends on how much presence is coming through.

But one could say even more important than that is to find a spacious relationship to thoughts the thoughts that are still there. That's fine, that's enough really. To find a spacious relationship this is just one way of putting it to find a spacious relationship to the thoughts that are still there that come.

Thoughts are only problematic if your self is in them because then the thoughts become a me an ego. When the thoughts are free of self and that happens every time you step

back and say, there's the thought or the emotion then the thoughts lose their heaviness you know the heaviness that otherwise people carry around with them as themselves which are their thoughts plus the emotions that go with the thoughts. It's always the next thing to be offended by and complaining about or then one thing attracts your attention and then it disappoints you and lets you down and you can complain again or at first something is just great this is the greatest thing on earth but it's form and so then it lets you down it could be a spiritual teacher it could be anything he's the greatest and then the form of the teacher does something that then oh no he's not he burped after dinner and of course the content obsessed mind loves to idolize other forms before in many cases before it gets let down by them and then tears them down and complains about them it loves to idolize form because it mistakes the essence the formless one life one consciousness with form and that is when it idolizes persons and of course there's the Buddha and Jesus yes they also burped occasionally after dinner of course they did because they had a physical body and other things probably and yet something was shining through them the formless and the egoic consciousness confused that with the form because it knew nothing of formless or in a very remote way it had some inkling that there was something there that's divine of God so there's a distant recognition but so distant that the mind obscured it, came in and misinterpreted it and this can also happen to yourself and it has happened to some people in whom presence has arisen who became transparent enough present enough for space the formless consciousness to shine through the form the psychological form especially the psychological form lost its density the egoic density which consists of an incessant stream of thoughts and emotions and so when it lost its density there were increasing gaps in that and suddenly the power of the divine if you want to call it which it is was able to come through the form but there is still the form is still to some extent operates and so it has happened and can happen that the form consciousness the object consciousness that is still operating although there are increasing gaps is now interpreting the power that is the power that is totally non-personal it's nothing to do with this form it's there because the form has become transparent but this content consciousness misinterprets that and identifies with the power that flows through and says that's me and then it what tends to happen that these are spiritual teachers who suddenly start saying I am the greatest who ever lived I am greater than and no greater will ever come after me form identity has reasserted itself the power was there and may still be for a little while be there so you can sometimes have the discrepancy in certain teachers there is an ego which sometimes can be quite mad because it gets there is an enormous power there suddenly and the ego doesn't know misinterprets it and claims and says it's me and when this happens usually it's the case when the teacher has certain claims of uniqueness that greater than this one or that one or that one greater than a comparison which is always the ego an ego device comes back in so be careful when you go to teachers who say no greater has ever been or will ever come or something like that or I am the greatest at the moment on the planet there may be a greater one once I am gone but not while I am here and so that's not only in teachers also something to be aware of in yourself the ego

can easily misinterpret what is happening in you to you in you the process of transformation the ego doesn't understand it in some ways the ego is afraid of it or at other times it might have a different approach the ego can identify with almost anything now what happens once the teacher has claimed his or her unique power and often it's the disciples who do it to the teacher and the teacher may just say nothing because the teacher rests in the form and the disciples say he is the greatest because he is our master I don't care and some masters allow people to say and do whatever they like they don't care if you think I am the greatest you can think what you like especially Indian teachers have that attitude which is quite nice do what you like I don't care so it can happen and it can also happen if there is still content consciousness left in the teacher the tendencies the egoic tendencies may have become dormant and yet they are still waiting and they can then be brought back to life by projections of specialness from people around you and so others believe that you are very special and then that awakens the dormant tendencies of the ego and suddenly one day you wake up they are right I am very special and then you get the weird thing in teachers that they begin to speak truth and half and non-truth is mixed together and that can be quite confusing at that point it is better to go away and take a conscious breath because that is all you need really and then it often happens that the space becomes obscured again in the teacher the power of the teaching is lost and the words that are being spoken are just from memory accumulated knowledge and some of the disciples may never notice it because they are so identified with their viewpoint of who the teacher is which is mind they are so identified with their thoughts their mind that they don't even notice that the vital vitality of the teaching the true aliveness of the teaching isn't there anymore because they are just stuck in their minds but here the important thing is in yourself the ego often comes in and you need to be alert and be conscious of specially any idea of specialness some people suddenly get the idea that they are Jesus when spirit and the spiritual power that comes through is true it's the same power that came through Jesus but it doesn't mean that they are the form identity of again the mind's misinterpretation is of course you are Christ in essence you are Christ because the very same life consciousness that came through him is in you as your own essence in that sense you are of course everybody is Christ the Christ but that's not what they are saying they are saying I am and you are not or they say I am and you will be in ten thousand years time space consciousness simple thing remember the just a breath brings in space it's worth more than a hundred spiritual books a conscious breath practiced throughout the day whenever you remember and then more and more the space is there because every book is content now it may well be that if it comes from space if the book comes was written from presence then within the content is hiding space and so when you open a book like that you read a few lines and you transcend the content because the content always points towards the space the entire content of your life then becomes of secondary significance and that's called freedom from the world and that means whatever happens events or things that don't happen but you thought they should whatever happens in your life is only content and it never again matters absolutely or

one hundred percent not that it is not honored the world of form is also honored but whatever happens to you or in your around you in your life never loses the power to take away your peace to shake you the power to draw you in totally and not that you now have a separation between you and what happens no, there is a sense of openness but you are not dependent anymore on what happens because you have something better which is yourself which is the space that you are, the stillness whatever you want, the pointer you want to use and then you notice it for the first time when things that used to upset you now just happen and you allow them

[Speaker 2] (6:35:53 - 6:35:54)

oh

[Speaker 1] (6:35:56 - 6:37:54)

because you are rooted in being you allow what happens that in itself can be a practice for space allowing being aligned with what happens allowing it because it is there anyway, it is happening anyway it is an event, there it is and there is the space Krishnamurti described the secret of his life once in a talk let me tell you my secret he said and and everybody thought finally he is telling us we have been waiting for 30 years for it come to every talk and every talk was like sand running through their fingers there was nothing there to grasp of course there wasn't because he was pointing to something that is beyond content so people were hoping to take something home after a talk and then they went back home and I said what did he talk about he said I don't know, it's gone this may happen to you also especially since you are not getting a folder with 100 steps for the next 10 years so this is what we did so he said you want to know my secret

[Speaker 2] (6:37:54 - 6:37:55)

yeah

[Speaker 1] (6:37:58 - 7:17:22)

I don't mind what happens that's it so most of the people didn't get it because they thought what next he is going to say something else so but what does that mean I don't mind what happens my life is not based on content the content I described that in the book as your life and your life situation and what most people call my life what they are really referring to is their life situation that's what they call my life their divorce or their next marriage or the relationship they have now and their job situation and their health situation and their living situation and their financial situation that's my life what else is there so basically it boils down for most people to these things the physical situation healthy or not healthy their age their relationship, marriage, divorce their financial circumstances the place where they live the work that they do this work situation their function in society how society sees them what society tells them about them whether

they are important or not and the weirdest most insane people are important in this world and many wise people are not important that's all totally mixed up totally irrelevant of course it has nothing to do with your importance but that's how people see their lives when I go to LA there are many people who are desperately wanting to be famous actors the city is full of people who want to be famous actors and it's just in the nature of things that only a small fraction of those can become famous there's just not there can't be that many famous actors because otherwise if everybody is famous it's meaningless it won't serve the ego anymore and so many of them if they don't go beyond fortunately some of them come to our talks and then they see beyond that and go beyond that but if they don't go beyond that many of those their life is condemned to be frustrating and what they would see as a failure a failed existence I could have become a great actor but nobody discovered me and then they miss hundreds of other things that they could do or could have done but primarily they would miss who they are beyond the content of their lives so all that is the content and that is what happens or doesn't happen and the moment the moment you become still or the moment you allow the content of this moment to be as it is not what I regard my life situation but simply the content of this moment just this moment to allow that, you don't allow your life situation, it doesn't work because your life situation is an abstraction, it's a story so the story says my life has failed up to now but maybe I can still make it it says I've lost it all, there's no point in starting again, I might as well accept that because Eckhart says we should accept but that's a story in your head it's an interpretation and it's totally meaningless to say that your life has failed, that you can't make it these are all stories that's not what acceptance is about you're not being asked to accept a story in the head but that you're telling yourself and others about your life acceptance is only to do with the form that the present moment takes so if you're in prison then it's the acceptance of that you're sitting here and there's a window with bars and there's a little bunk bed and whatever the situation is around you and you're breathing this is how it is at the moment there, that that, yeah and it could be very unpleasant maybe you're cold, maybe it's noisy maybe it's hot, maybe you're still hungry, it is but it is as it is at this moment it is as it is not the story I'm going to be in here for another 10 years that's a story the acceptance is only needed for this moment and if you accept this moment as it is because there is never anything else the rest is abstraction there's only this moment and then it's an uncompromising facing the reality not the story with which you interpret this moment but the direct reality of this moment and people confuse that with a story they tell themselves about it here I am, my life has failed I'm just giving the example of prison because that is usually interpreted as a very undesirable life situation it could also be an illness, it could be a physical disability, it could be some great loss that has suddenly happened to you, whatever it is I'm just taking a more extreme situation that usually people would invent stories about and would make you very unhappy if you are sitting in prison and telling yourself stories about your life you become very unhappy but if you stay with just this moment at that immediately the prison becomes for you a monastery no matter how unpleasant it is and then monasteries can be pretty unpleasant almost as

bad as the prison some of them and in Tibet they even have the practice, some of the monks they go out in the middle of the night the temperature is sub zero and they meditate naked or they put a wet blanket on you that would be called torture you stay with this just this moment and the worse your life circumstances get the stronger the motivation your motivation will be once you know have a glimpse of the truth the stronger your motivation will be not to leave this moment does it mean you are not facing reality? no, it means you are for the first time facing reality because reality is the form that this moment takes let's stay in prison for a while there is your sitting on the floor on a hard chair there is your metal dish with the gruel or whatever you have just eaten there are the bars this is how it is at this moment there is nothing you can do unless you decide to escape in which case that is what you do at this moment but if there is no possibility you stay with what is and you face it for the first time because any story that you invent about my life which is your life situation is thought is an abstraction and that is not facing reality so the only way you can face reality is always to face the reality of just this moment and the worse it gets the more strongly motivated you will be not to leave this moment, because the moment you leave this moment you will become very unhappy the moment you start thinking about my life because there is no such thing as your life there is only this moment you are life experiencing consciousness experiencing the form of this moment but you are always deep down untouched by anything the space itself in which things happen the moment you allow things to be as they are at this moment only you realize yourself as the space in which things happen and not as what happens you are not what happens you are the space in which it happens and at that moment you have stepped out of content of your life particularly when the content becomes so called unpleasant it is vital that you step out of content but only by facing the content directly, not by running away from it internally it's again it's by facing the very limitations of the life of form at this moment and one of the greatest limitations is to be in prison another perhaps even greater limitation is to encounter the limitations of your physical body when it happens, you can't move anymore or find it hard to move or the body is getting so old or diseased to face directly not to invent a story around it, but to face the condition directly this is how it is the very limitation when it's faced and totally allowed to be becomes an opening into space consciousness and that's the miracle of the turning around the turning around the worst thing in your life can be the doorway and will become the doorway but you don't have to wait for the worst thing to happen to you it may or it may not well death will come eventually sooner or later, sometimes sooner, sometimes later you don't have to wait until they put you in prison or until the body fails or until the stock market collapses and the real estate market collapses or even that's gone, who knows I'm not predicting you don't have to go around and sell your shares but the world of form is unstable you don't have to wait for anything just work with every little thing by choice face this moment at any moment directly and bring an uncompromising yes to it that's not, it is passive and active at the same time the passive seems to be that you say I allow this moment to be as it is but you cannot allow this moment to be as it is unless you bring an

uncompromising this is how it is that's the sword that you can see in the face of the Zen master it cuts through time through every mentally constructed story to the reality of just just this then on the periphery of your life you still have, of course you have a past a kind of past, you remember it and you have a future but it's not heavy anymore, it's on the periphery of things so here we your life situation and your life your life lies underneath what happens your life even that's a mistake to say your life because language immediately creates illusion that's why some teachers never talk and for some reason some are mad enough to talk laughter my life is an illusory statement even when I say your true life is not the content even that is not your life because there is no separation between you and life you are life, you are life both in the unmanifested timeless, eternal essence of all life is in you as pure consciousness and you are a temporary expression of life in this form so there is no such thing as my life because you are life manifesting temporarily as this form so where is my life? you are life I am life experiencing the world of form as like this at this moment and then it will change and then it will change again so I don't have a life and you don't have a life because the moment you say I have a life or my life you separate yourself from life and you think there is something there is me and there is life who is talking? life is talking you cannot be without life your very being is life so how can you lose your life?

it's only through mental abstraction that you can have the illusion that you can lose your life there is not you and life or could there be? who is that you talking without life? nobody could say me or my so isn't it great that you cannot lose your life because you don't have one?

so how deceptive language is and of course language is thought thought that becomes sounds very basic sounds we are hoping to understand the universe through that how could you? just a few sounds absurd so there is not it cannot take you to reality and it doesn't have to it's good really what it's good for is basic things give me please a glass of water that works I am thirsty or whatever or please come here that works and that's how language originated it's to reproduce to find symbols for things and then symbols for actions and there are still many words that are there that are simply originally imitated the sound of an action and then become like knock knock whistling whistle whistle there are many onomatopoeic sounds that imitate actions no more no more than that so let's go from one level of discourse you say your life situation and your life that's one level of discourse on that level it is helpful let's look at it for a moment from that perspective there is your life situation and there is your life and your life is vital eternal your life situation is content and your life is space the formless unmanifested one eternal life that expresses itself in form temporarily as the content that's one level of discourse if you want to go even more closer to reality even that's not true to say that it is your life it's just a helpful pointer it's not the truth language cannot encapsulate the truth so when we say there is your life circumstances and there is your life it's a pointer ah so all the stuff of my circumstances are not my life they are just the content of my life my fifth

marriage my sixth divorce my bankruptcy my children getting into trouble someone close to me dying all content of life and then there is life so and now let's say that's your life your life is to find your life go to face this moment directly the form of it the content but not the story just this and then by facing it directly and accepting it go beyond the form if it's a limitation and usually form is some kind of limitation because even if you moved from a cabin or a trailer to a mansion at first it would look like a liberation and then you find the mansion has its own kind of limitations different kinds of limitations you need staff to look after it there is always somebody around if it's in a good climate little ants may come in and basically it doesn't make much difference what kind of bed you sleep in whether you sit in a comfortable chair or not so comfortable chair it's not that's a big deal it's only when you associate it with me and the story it becomes a big deal my life situation my life and then it's not really your life because it is life you are it so we go from that level of discourse to even deeper and say you don't even it's not even your life it's life and you are it or even better because there is no ultimately on that level you and I it's not that you are it I am it I there is only one ultimately Causing Miracles puts it beautifully I believe it's there there is only one of us there is only one primordial I it is the I of all beings the life essence in each form of life the space in each form of life which even physicists are beginning to discover because when they look at forms then they see that every life form including so called inanimate life because there is no such thing as inanimate life the table is full of pulsating it's a pulsating energy field it just looks inanimate through our senses physicists will tell you it is an energy field it's pulsating, there are atoms moving atoms and molecules but the atoms and molecules that make up the table or the physical body or the flower they are so they are so few that both the table and the physical body consist 99.99% of empty space so much space is not only between the atoms even if you look inside the atoms you find even there it's almost exclusively empty space so you can see how the physicists view of the reality and the spiritual realization of what the essence of all beings is coming together and you can see the truths of the ancient buddhist texts before there even were any physicists they were already writing that emptiness is the essence of all things it is in form form is emptiness, emptiness is form that there is ultimately although we are talking here in terms of difference between form and emptiness ultimately they are one because the essence of every so called form is emptiness itself also it is one and we cannot understand through sequences of sounds what that emptiness, because emptiness does the sound, emptiness so don't fall into the mistake of now believing that you know what it is, that's the mind you say emptiness oh yes and then your child asks what is the essence of all life if you have an enlightened child and then you say emptiness ah, ok now I know it's the same many times when children ask daddy why is this like that, why do the birds, how do the birds know where they are flying at the end of the summer they fly 6,000 miles 10,000 miles to another how do they know where to go they land again where they first were born how do they know where that is yes my child let me tell you it's instinct ah ok and people who can reproduce that kind of knowledge tend to do well academically and there are many other children who may not do so well academically

because they are too deep and the schools don't recognize debts they are not there to recognize debts they are there to recognize and promote shallowness and so even Einstein who could think quite deeply, if thinking could ever be called deep, it's not really, but he could think better than many other people only because he had access to stillness he was considered a little bit dim at school he was considered considered a little bit slow not promising material and it's only when they left him alone the system left him alone and he got a job in Switzerland at the patent office that he was able to do he was slow he had to go within he had to go into stillness, he had to listen there and then thoughts came then he had to go back into stillness and then, ah and then one day he was lying in his bath and he went very still oh, relativity and that changed the entire view of the universe that we had up to then and then he came up with deep spiritual insights because he went into the stillness where it all resides and he said the true value of a human being is determined by the degree to which he is free of self I thought he was a physicist but he knew because all knowledge doesn't matter what form it takes it came out of his ability to be still and the realization came out of that and he said the way we view reality as separate things and separate bodies and everything separate which of course thought contributes to separates he called it an optical illusion of consciousness that's our view of the world you know what an optical illusion is when you see something that's not there and so it's an optical illusion of consciousness so great all that's required is to go beyond the pseudo knowledge of the mind not that you never use it again in this world of form for practical purposes it's fine but to find yourself or the meaning of life or the ultimate purpose of things cannot be found in that realm of form but it's there in you as yourself no time is required to be that to find who you are to be who you are just stillness just presence just allowing this moment to be as it is the form of it don't fight the forms of your life because you want something better go through it by facing directly looking that's how it is there it is and so you burn up gradually the story of me becomes insignificant only remnants remain little memories that are helpful because it's good to remember people's phone numbers or your past husbands or wives what you did it's fine there's no problem there there's no self in it but not base your life on the content of your story and that's how the ego disappears as thought identification is relinquished ego goes because ego is thought identification that's all ego is thought plus emotion together egoic entity stillness presence dissolve ego and you don't need to ask questions like how long will it take before my ego is dissolved it doesn't matter just this moment is enough all you ever need to be concerned about is this moment that's all there is so it's not necessary to be present for the rest of your life or the rest of this retreat because if you told yourself I need to be present for the rest of this day for the rest of this retreat I need to be present that's difficult because you've created future in your mind and then you have a problem already am I going to make it and already you would begin to forget whether you're present at this moment worrying about whether you can sustain presence just this is enough just this the present moment is always enough that's the secret of life it's all you need it's enough because there's nothing else it looks as if the present moment were trapping you in form because it takes some form and people want

to get out of it to the unlimited I want freedom, I don't want this and even if you have a mansion eventually it will feel like a prison and you sit in there and you look at the walls I want to get out of here the same thing that came when you were sitting in the cabin and then you travel again hoping to find yourself somewhere else the world of form is always some kind of limitation because form means it's limited, it's form no matter what situation you go into it's some kind of limitation it does not mean that you cannot try to improve your life on the level of form but not hoping that you find some ultimate fulfillment in that play around with form, it's great I'm not saying if you're in a cabin you should not try to live in a mansion no, why not try it? because you're playing in the world of form but if you hope that the mansion will free you from unsatisfactoriness that's not going to work but if you're already free sitting in the cabin and cabins are great I've lived for periods of time people have put me up in cabins and it was great, it's one of the greatest places I love cabins probably prefer them to a mansion so there's nothing wrong with it, but if you think you would like a change this world is there to be played with and then you try ok, I'll make money and then I can live in a mansion and we'll try that not that it makes any difference so you're already rooted in being in the cabin then you can go out and play but if you're not rooted you cannot go out and play because it will be a desperate struggle to get somewhere and when you get there it won't make you happy either but once you're rooted within if you want to play in the world of form participate in the world of form and you'll enjoy whatever you're doing because you don't need it and yet you can great energy can flow into it you don't need a particular result and enjoy what you're doing tremendously and then you'll probably get a good result, not that it matters to you so it varies one person maybe say it's so peaceful why should I move out of my cabin, it's great here and all you play with is flowers you go around, you water the flowers whatever you do little movements may be enough for you or you may say, ok, now I'd love to experience some other form and then you play and go out of your cabin and into something else fine it differs the way in which the state of presence manifests in humans differs some are happy to remain where they are they're home, inside you're home inside you don't need the psychological need for future goes because that's so strong in the egoic consciousness, you need the next moment because you're not fulfilled in this moment why are you not fulfilled in this moment? because you're not in it the only reason why this moment is not fulfilling is because you're not honoring it you're not there the depth of it remains hidden all you see is the external form of it and you're running away from it if you're not running away from the external form of it but face it, direct and say yes, then the form gives way to the depth of the present moment which is the formless inseparable from who you are in your essence so life is a great adventure what you do on the surface of things, because everything is the surface of things, whatever happens situations is up to you you don't need to be things to be in a particular way to fulfill you, to find yourself through, finally they'll recognize me, when I live in a mansion they will all come and want to be with me and then you would encounter the limitation of being extremely wealthy you attract all kinds of people who are only interested in the mental image they have of you, if not in your money they want

to add something to their mental image I had tea with this and that person rich and famous that surely must add something to who I am don't you think?

I've grown a little bit bigger by having had tea with such and such he called me the other day I had a talk on the phone with I guess I was saying to the Dalai Lama the other day thought I'd just let that slip in I didn't, so don't worry the ego loves that that's fine we may have questions this afternoon if any questions remain sounds coming out of one mouth and other sounds coming out of another mouth if no questions remain we'll be happy very happy without questions and if somebody does not want to make sounds they can write their questions on a piece of paper and we may look at it on Thursday afternoon for written questions some people don't like to make sounds in public because you never know what might come out what are they going to think of me? I don't need to mention because you know it already that life can be very enjoyable when you are rooted in space the space consciousness the unmanifested it is only then that the world of form can be enjoyable because it doesn't matter that much anymore and then you can enjoy but if it matters it's hard to enjoy it that's it

[Speaker 2] (7:18:24 - 7:23:19)

thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you

[Speaker 1] (7:23:35 - 7:57:33)

we often experience interesting weather on retreats as you know there is no such thing as bad weather nevertheless let's use that word for a moment bad weather is more suited for awakening than good weather the worst conditions for spiritual awakening would be ideal conditions but life is merciful and generous so usually you get what's right what works make sure you are in the body present not waiting for anything at all you may sometimes experience even on retreats one could perhaps say particularly on retreats in some cases the pain body coming up how do you know it's the pain body and not something else as we know pain body is old accumulated emotion from the past that lives in you and that is as long as you are identified with it part of the ego because the ego is whatever you identify with so when you don't recognize the old pain that comes up for what it is it becomes it becomes part of the mind structures that we call ego and it fuels the thinking of the ego and derives nourishment the pain body derives nourishment from the negative thought processes that are working over time once the old emotion has taken possession of the mind this is called the vicious circle how do you know it's the pain body and not an emotion that's being created at this very moment by some kind of thought the pain body is usually recognized by the fact that the emotion is out of proportion to the event the triggering event it's overblown reaction and everybody can see it except the sufferer and if you're taken out of your everyday life where there are lots of reasons lots of triggers the pain body which has a dormant state and an active

state when it's ready to become active from its dormant state your everyday life has plentiful triggers that the pain body can use and react and then awaken through it because in one's normal everyday life all kinds of little things don't go the way they should throughout the day and the pain body will react which will use a trigger which could be anything a pain body that's ready to awaken can use anything but it doesn't know that this is the trigger and if something truly drastic should happen to you somebody dies you get home and your partner left you just left a letter or you get home and all your possessions are gone or you suddenly find yourself in the street because the president of your company has disappeared with the money and your pension fund is gone too and then of course the form on the level of form physical, psychological form you will probably experience a certain degree of turbulence unless you're so deeply rooted in being that no matter what happens you just go and say ok somebody dies and say there is no death but that's not necessarily a desirable state because you're still here as form also the form aspect of you will react to things that happen on the level of form but the difference is when you are in touch with being with yourself beyond form, with the stillness within the turbulence that you experience the emotional turbulence does not touch the core of who you are there is always a core of peace and even if someone close to you dies, let's say a child perhaps the worst death for someone to experience is not so much the death of a parent when they reach old age but the death of a child that seems inexplicable and it seems we cannot find an explanation for it it seems premature and something like that will affect you you will weep but if you already live in surrender the deepest core within you will shine at that moment with an enormous power and externally you are weeping and externally the emotion is there and underneath the emotion you feel deep peace, deeper than ever before I mentioned that before that is always the case, the worse things get out there on the level of form could affect your emotional level also the more strongly the the deathless the formless one life shines within you and the deeper the peace and anything that happens to you can then only strengthen that so you do not become callous or indifferent, no you can still weep in fact that is these are the two sides of true compassion that you have empathy with the suffering of form but you are also in touch with the formless that is beyond suffering and you know that as you may the course in miracles has before it all starts on page one before page one as a short summary of the course, just three or four lines these lines summarize the whole course and that is all you need to know if you know that you don't need to open the book or any other book no doesn't mean no as a concept but no in here living knowledge nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God that's the summary it's the summary of all teachings nothing real can be threatened what does that mean that ultimately what appears as a form can of course be threatened but the form reality is not the ultimate reality it is only a temporary reality that can be threatened but it is not ultimately real within each form is concealed the formless that gives life to the form the formless one life gives life to the form appears as a form which seemingly can be threatened but nothing real can be threatened nothing unreal exists herein lies the peace of God means in knowing this lies the peace of God so

if something drastic should happen to you there may well be we can't predict there may be a turbulence of emotion and underneath it a peace particularly if something has died around you something that was part of your form identity however you are no longer totally confined to something has died now death means dissolving form a form dissolves where there was a form there is now a whole that's what death is whether it's literal death like somebody dying and that's an amazing thing when you go somebody that perhaps you've seen everyday and suddenly in the same building, the same house the same room where you used to be with that person he or she is gone it's gone, the armchair is empty the desk there's suddenly an absence where there was someone and the next day completely gone and that is the actual death and then there are other kinds of deaths that also leave a hole in your existence your partner suddenly disappears who knows it happens, fallen in love with somebody else gone or something that was part of your identity on the level of form your reputation you did one silly thing and your whole reputation ruined everybody is laughing about you or whatever or criticizing you and that also leaves a hole where there was a form reputation is something it's a thought form, a collective thought form people tell you that you're great and then you take mmm, me, great thought VIP, me and suddenly the world changes its mind maybe you haven't even done anything maybe just some newspaper people thought they'd said enough good things and now to make it interesting they'll invent something and suddenly the reputation is destroyed true or untrue who knows again, it's a kind of death there was a form that was part of who you thought you were hopefully you were not limited to just that dimension because if you were, life gets very unhappy when a form dissolves what it leaves in whatever case, whether it's actual death or a kind of death it leaves a nothingness an opening a space where there was someone or something and to most human beings that's extremely frightening they're extremely afraid of the hole that's left in your existence when someone or something around you dies, it feels painful to someone who has never had any glimpse of the dimension of the formless particularly to someone who has never had any glimpse of that dimension because someone who has never had a glimpse of the formless death, which is the eruption of the formless into ordinary life which is concerned with content it is the sudden removal of one important piece of content from your life is the most frightening and painful thing that can happen to you, to a human being especially if they have not never touched that within that is beyond form if they've already touched it not even perhaps as a continuous realization but if they have touched it perhaps here perhaps wherever if they have had glimpses then those initial glimpses that they have had of the formless within will become strengthened when death comes into your life or rather takes something out of your life when death takes some content out of your life and then it happens that some humans have grown enormously through death and they say it's because of that great loss that I went deeper within, I had to something something within said it doesn't say anything but it said there is no death it's the knowing that only the form dies and so death is the great opportunity of the formless dimension shining through into your life because it leaves the hole so you can think of a person's life as consisting of content, they have a fabric

constructed of things they put together like a tapestry a tapestry this is my life they say that consists that's my wife, they're my children and this is my job there's my savings and the stock market investments and my dog and it's all part of the tapestry of my life and that's all everybody has that that's the content of your life and suddenly and it happens sooner or later this nice where everything is in place my life is ok and suddenly something gets torn out of the tapestry it's violent and you have a gaping hole in that here's my life and there's a gaping hole in my life but there's a grace hiding there cause it's through that seeming absence of the form an enormous amount of peace if you can be with it without rejecting internally running away from it an enormous amount of peace can come through the sudden eruption of the formless into your life which is death and that is only really happens if you don't run away from it if you face it and this will be easier if you've already it is your practice to face what is any moment because the form that this moment takes changes continuously and one day will come a moment will come, always the same moment, but a form of the moment will come that is death it must come someone close to you will die, unless you die first, you will lose something, somebody will leave you one way or another, they die or they leave you, or you die or you leave them and so if you're ready this is beautiful, the practice of facing what is and then you face that and you look and don't try to explain or interpret and if you're not identified with mind, it's easier to step out of the mind, because the mind will go berserk because it thought it had figured it all out, the mind thought it had figured out your whole life and then something happens that doesn't make sense that shouldn't, that doesn't fit in at all into this, what I have constructed and also it's a dreadful shock to the ego, which is the mind because it shows you I'm not in control ultimately I'm not in control so death why is death so is it taboo still in our civilization because humans know only form only content they're afraid of that which is hiding behind form which is the formless, which is God if it has any meaning God is the formless one life that is the essence of every form and it shines more when there is death that's the grace that is concealed in every death whether it's a loss which is a kind of death or whether it's actual death there's enormous grace in every death the greatest grace that can come into this life is through death one could almost say that every life form has a certain degree of density and it obscures the light of the source, the one source of all life and depending on its density it obscures it more or less it is our purpose here to become transparent so that that can shine through which really means to find death already, before it happens, before the form dissolves, to find death before death finds you because it will find you, it's only a question whether you find it first and so what is death and it is the formless one life, death is not the opposite of life it's the opposite of birth the moment you are born, you are condemned to death and everybody in this room will experience the moment of death one could almost say it's already printed on you somewhere a date and it's hanging over your head we don't realize how fragile how unstable our life is on the level of form how quickly what looked solid can dissolve not only the body, structures, anything and our civilization is trying to conceal that, we mustn't just pretend that everything is okay everything is lasting there are some

civilizations where people are still more comfortable with death dead bodies are not hidden, and in the past it was the case in virtually in every civilization death was normal, a normal part of life but as the ego grows in collectively death becomes more and more unacceptable I've actually heard somebody say that totally unacceptable so what we are doing here is we are finding death which is really what is that, to find that which is beyond form that's all and death is hiding in everyone ultimately it's the god god in you that's death because it's the formless one life, and we cannot explain why death comes to a human being at a certain time, we cannot understand it, but everything is connected to the totality, and in that sense there's no meaningless event, because there's no separate event every tiniest event is not an event, it's only when we think about it, it's a separate event but everything that happens is part of the web of the totality, there is a reason why it happens it would be futile to try and figure out what that is, you can't very rare instances can you get a glimpse of that it actually made something that looked bad make sense but it is enough to simply realize and accept the fact that whatever happens is part of the web of interconnectedness that's the entire universe and then you get something like that drastic event in New York a few years ago when the towers collapsed why did this have to happen to those people who were there seemingly unprepared we don't know but everything is there is a web in which everything is connected and ultimately only the form dissolves, nothing real can be threatened, do we know how many people realized the formless a few minutes before they died on that occasion how many of those we don't know probably quite a few every second somebody dies on the planet no no no no continuously they are dying and continuously someone is born no no the born goes a little bit faster no no so we really here we are becoming familiar with death in a deeper sense we are dying to our form identity not that it doesn't exist anymore our form identity continues as long as we carry around this form or walk around as this form but we are dying to identification with it, exclusive identification with it and that is a death because we are dying to form and the death is the entry point into that state which is also the state of life what Jesus called eternal life, which doesn't mean it goes on and on, it means timeless he always talked about eternal life you will taste eternal life, you can taste eternal life, timeless life not millions of years that is within you, concealed in the present moment formless, the formless one life the rest is forms of life they are all hiding the formless one life carrying it as the innermost essence within which we could even say is the equivalent of the state of the universe before it became something the beginning of time, some people call it they say that before the universe came into being it was one now nobody can possibly imagine, figure out or explain what that one point was out of which the whole universe came they call it an explosion the big bang but before the universe was what was there? and of course no scientist can answer it, nobody can answer it all you can say is there was nothing and out of that nothing everything came and is still coming because we are still part of the explosion, the original explosion its manifestation out of the unmanifested but every life form that has come out of it carries the origin of the entire universe still within as the unmanifested, formless one life so the point before all life

started is still within you that which is prior to all form and that which is there when all forms are gone as yourself as God you are that if God has any meaning, it is that not an entity somewhere in space or time but the life within all beings the intelligence the life that lives within the recognition of that in another is love the recognition of God in the other, the formless which is death really it's almost shocking to say death and God are one I saw it in a film some years ago I think it was called Out of Africa about a farm in Africa and suddenly one night the whole farm goes up in flames and the black servant of the owner, who is a European comes running and says God has come, God has come it's all going up in flames there's a deep truth there and there's nothing more beautiful than the voluntary death that you are dying here and it's quite it's not painful it's joyful and when death comes it's not anything to be feared anymore and you will still weep when somebody close to you dies and feel peaceful at the same time because you have tasted the deathless within or eternal life

[Speaker 2] (7:57:33 - 7:57:34)

life

[Speaker 1] (7:57:39 - 8:05:22)

you die every time when you step out of a thought or an emotion step back, disidentify and allow it to be out of the form into the formless and realize that's who you are the formless was disguised was hidden in the form you die every time when you accept this moment as it is the egoic entity dies in the state of acceptance of what is that's why it hates it that's why it always finds something to be unhappy about because I've got to find something here that I can be I can complain about find personally offensive whatever it is and so it sometimes happens on talks or retreats although as you may have noticed there's very little that is being said here that anybody can disagree with because everything is so self-evident the truth is so self-evident but occasionally a word or two may come out of this mouth that somebody could disagree with and with some people it happens that when they hear something like that they cling suddenly something within them gets a hold of that statement and then they wait three days later when question time comes not realizing that 99% of it was the truth that was self-evident that they also knew within this thing spoils it all for me you said that and that's not right because I'm an expert and I can tell you that was quite wrong it's probably true but it's probably also not very important it's always wonderful I walk a lot in the forest at home untouched and when you look around the forms around you almost half of them are dying they are dead or dying in the process they are decaying tree trunks leaves everywhere forms are entering the state of death or have died so half of what you see in the life of the forest is death and the other half is life at first sight and at second sight you realize the life of the forest comes out of the dying forest the dying forest is part of the life of the forest even on that level there is no death there is just changing life forms even on that level the dead tree trunk isn't dead at all it's full of life so wherever you

look life does not have an opposite on whatever level and the life essence is one with death so ultimately death and life are one or the one life that we could also call God that's quite amazing I'm amazed myself I've never quite said it in that way but the truth is always the same of course but always comes out in a slightly different way because it's always fresh and new if you can completely accept the death of someone close to you then you can find deep peace in that enormous aliveness and yourself in it a woman told me that she sat next to her son who was 30 years old as he died of an illness that's painful it's probably more painful for a parent to witness the death of a child than it is for the child or the adult grown up child to see the death of a parent and she sat with him and suddenly she was able to go into the state of pure presence and that was a few moments before he died and she said when he died during those few minutes when it happened the entire room was bathed in divine grace she felt an enormous grace coming out of the dissolving body filling the entire room and she had never felt so peaceful and at that moment she knew that death is actually also a benediction it is not something to be feared and some of that stayed with her forever but then she said five minutes later the mind started to become active and it said things about how dreadful it was and then she started then, only then she started weeping and screaming and couldn't accept but she had witnessed that in the state of presence and it had transformed her although she seemed to have lost it shortly afterwards, something remained within her and it is always grace when that to accompany someone who dies if there are any questions perhaps we can ask there may be there is one person there and one person there

[Speaker 2] (8:05:22 - 8:05:48)

Can you share your views about your thinking about monogamy and responsible non-monogamy and commitments made in the past and how they apply in the present and if you're not with the one you love do you love the one you're with?

[Speaker 1] (8:06:06 - 8:14:05)

This concerns your life on the level of form and there is not on that level there is not right and wrong there is not one way that is correct and the other way that is incorrect commitment and responsibility primary commitment is to be true to life to live rightly at this moment it is your commitment to this moment does that mean that whatever emotion comes in can suddenly change everything no if you are committed to this moment you bring presence to this moment and presence provides continuity in your life also it doesn't mean that you jump from one thing to the next because of this moment I'm suddenly falling in love with somebody else this happens too but if you are with someone if there is more than a connection on the level of mind and emotions if the other person reflects back to you your own essential reality the formless one life which can only happen when you are still you can be still together can only happen when stillness is an important part of the relationship that is all the commitment you need to

be committed to the stillness in your relationship it doesn't even mean that you need to every day sit together and meditate for two hours it doesn't need to what that is on the level of form doesn't matter maybe you don't meditate but you are able to be with the other person and not invade the other person with words you are giving space to the other person and the other is giving space to you, you allow your partner to be your partner allows you to be there is spaciousness in the relationship the only real commitment you need is to the spaciousness in the relationship if you lose that nothing makes sense you might have signed a contract that you are going to be together for the rest of your life but that contract will then be broken it will suddenly become meaningless the ego wants of course something like that because it says I need to be in control and I need to have security and I need to feel that we are truly committed so we have to sign something and that may work if you are committed to spaciousness and stillness in the relationship then the signing could be a nice part of that if you are not committed to spaciousness and stillness in the relationship no matter how many contracts you sign they won't work and because fluctuating emotions will take over the mind will take over mental positions will take over and you will be battling out your battles with your respective mental positions one against the other identify with your positions identify with the emotions that go with mental positions make the other wrong periodically have to act out the pain body every week or two have to feed the other's pain body until finally you've had enough and say that doesn't work for us anymore and then something comes you forget about the signed contract and then try to find a way of undoing it so the commitment is meaningless unless there is a commitment to spaciousness stillness spacious stillness in the relationship that's the primary commitment now that commitment being there what you do on the level of form doesn't really matter whether you sign a contract or whether you say we don't need to sign a contract we are committed to spaciousness and beyond that if on the level of form a time should come when we realize that somebody wishes to part for whatever reason it would be done in the peace of spaciousness somebody would say I need to go away who knows what form that will take that doesn't matter anymore you may be together for the rest of your life spaciousness does not guarantee that the relationship will necessarily be there for the rest of your life because everything has a has a much some relationships work, mature, everybody grows through them and then it's time to separate and perhaps something else another constellation another arises in this world of form this can happen that's all on the level of form so whether on the level of the two forms a relationship is permanent or not is secondary ultimately on the level of form nothing is permanent so if you don't leave each other one or the other will die so you don't really you do whatever you feel inclined to do with the partner formal agreement no formal agreement whatever it may be all of that doesn't ultimately matter all that matters is the primary commitment and responsibility which is your responsibility to life to be true to life which is not lose yourself in the world of form because then there is no space and all you have is two people with their mental content their mental emotional content trying to somehow make it and somehow they make it to the end until somebody dies but there is

no lasting relationship without the space so that is the question to ask then commitment is absolutely necessary but it is the commitment not to something on the level of form it is the commitment to the formless in the relationship then it will work out even if it doesn't last it will work out ok

[Speaker 2] (8:14:07 - 8:14:36)

so could you speak about choice so you are being still in the stillness and then there is what comes and what is choice in terms of well just that but then also in terms of creating a life situation

[Speaker 1] (8:14:47 - 8:55:30)

in the unconscious stage which of course means to be identified with one's conditioning, the mind the mental emotional conditioning from the past which is the ego it is obvious that in that state there is no choice because whatever you do and whatever you think is conditioned by the past you have not woken up in that state so you are simply acting out past conditioning no choice pain body completely identified with that acting out past pain and not knowing that it is past pain no choice so there are still many humans on the planet who simply have no choice who do what they do because they are still immersed in the dream called total conditioning of the dream and then gradually something happens in humans and suddenly there is a realization that they have a choice and that often starts, often it comes through great pain the pain is generated by the unconsciousness the unconscious living the unconscious living becomes painful, you generate enormous amount of suffering for yourself and others and then the suffering for many people suddenly wakes you up it's like dreaming a nightmare and you can't stand it anymore and you and then you go back oh it comes for some people as the realization that they are having certain kinds of thoughts and they have had certain kinds of thoughts in their head for years without knowing it and in many cases these thoughts were very negative thoughts about themselves, about other people repetitive thoughts and you suddenly look at your own thoughts and see that is a dreadful world in my head and you suddenly realize if I lived with a person who speaks what I think it would be hell if I lived with a person who criticizes me as much as my mind does it would be dreadful I would have left a long time ago and where does that realization come from, that comes from not from thought, it comes from the suddenly emerging ability to stand back and see what kinds of thoughts are going through your mind and that's the beginning of an awakening and that is the beginning of choice because first of all you also see that there is a relationship between your inner state and your external circumstances and you can see that to a large extent your thoughts create what you experience as the world your world, your reality so some people are stuck in a dreadful world they haven't looked at the root of it they think all the evil is out there so they are fighting with machine guns and bombs not realizing that the dysfunction is not in others it's in them they haven't woken up yet so you wake up out of identification with

thoughts, for the first time are able to see the thoughts and then you can actually say I can change my thoughts I can think different thoughts not as easy as it seems some thoughts are very deep seated you can change sometimes the surface of a thought but other thoughts are linked to emotions and they are not so easy to change so it requires a great deal of presence and alertness to get in there and to sense also the connection between your thoughts and the old emotions in you that are still fueling old thoughts but if you get in there and bring alertness to it you can, yes you can change the structure of thought and yes things like new age things that are actually good come in that are things like positive thinking things like visualization things like wanting to achieve something change your life and imagine that the change has already happened you see already the desired reality as reality and you feel as if it were already there that's how to however we have come to a little obstacle here and that's called the ego you do not need to be free of ego you can, you only need a relatively limited degree of freedom from ego to be able to change your thoughts, some degree yes because totally in the grip of ego means totally identified with thoughts so it's nothing you can do you can step outside and change the thoughts that you think and the ego is still operating you can then, the ego will attempt to create a life that it feels will provide you with ultimate fulfillment or satisfaction, will give you yourself and I know quite a few people who have done that they realize the power of positive thinking they realize the power of visualization which of course needs to be coupled with action but if the two go together it can be very powerful creative visualization positive thinking repetition and after a while they feel better and they create a better reality and I've met quite a few people who have done that and they created a better reality and a few years later or a couple of years later they came back and said I'm unhappy again and it's just I've got everything I wanted but it's not fulfilling it's not it and I want to get out of it it's imprisoning me now I got the place I wanted I got the business I wanted and now it's eating me up I want out so we have and many people are at that level where you have partial freedom from ego but you're basically still serving the ego, the ego still has wants and needs and positive thinking can be used to fulfill the wants and needs but they can never be fulfilled so you always end up with not feeling quite, that's not it and then comes a higher degree of externalizing what is within and that is not from the perspective of a limited unfulfilled me that needs a certain change in my life situation in order to find myself, to feel fulfilled to feel complete to be happy it doesn't arise out of that need something comes that is one with the purpose of life itself and that can work through you and create something that is not there to fulfill the ego but is there to fulfill the purpose of the universe itself and when that happens it still sometimes looks from the outside as if you were using creative thinking or visualization but it's different let me tell you how it happened with the power of now I've lived for years a relatively secluded life in the countryside in England in a little house and sometimes people would come to me for counseling occasionally people would invite me to little groups I would travel to a weekend workshop and it helped people, some people changed it's basically what I do now but instead of several hundred people, ten people came sometimes three once I had one

person came for the workshop and at one talk I had to talk to myself laughter on the level of my external situation my life did not seem fulfilled although a few people were deriving benefit and were waking up, not many, very few and I knew surely there's more that is possible but it just wasn't happening I was not unhappy but there was a puzzled sense of there must be more reach more people so I said use me to life which I am I'm open use me, I'm here and one day I woke up and I had the vision of a book and I had the vision and the vision came as if it already existed and I wrote it I drew a circle on a white sheet of paper and this is the book and then I wrote translated into 25 languages read by millions of people changing the life of millions of people changing the consciousness of the planet and I knew that book was virtually already there or it was in the unmanifested and that was on my desk for about a year and a half and this was this was something this was not something that I wanted to bring about, it was a deeper knowing that this would come and this tends to happen when life moves through you I had asked for it it's good to ask for it and so life came moved through, not immediately the thing was on the desk for more than a year and nothing happened a year and a half approximately it was on the desk and I looked at it it's coming, but where? laughter so the life was moving through and one morning I woke up and I didn't know that was part of that realizing I need to leave England why? I don't know I need to leave, I need to move to the west coast of North America it was so strong that there was no question that I had to leave it that was life moving me away I had to move to the west coast I immediately started selling things putting things away, giving up my home took a few months buying a ticket I knew two people, one in Vancouver one in California went off to the west coast I sat on the plane, where am I going and what for?

laughter I don't know, life is taking me arrived in Vancouver stayed for a few weeks traveled, took a Greyhound bus to California had one contact there then I needed to find somewhere to stay that wasn't expensive, somebody offered to put me up I went to a meditation meeting and somebody said, I have a spare bedroom and again life had arranged in such a way I suddenly see everything fall into place to go towards the original vision, but I didn't know that yet, it has anything to do with the original vision that person who put me up was a complete hermit had never any visitors, no social life, and he was out all day working in his office, and then he came home, I was just sat there, surrounded by just walls didn't know anybody, couldn't go anywhere what am I doing here? one day I got out my old writings I had done, after each workshop little works that I had done, I often would take notes what I had said, what had come out that wasn't a book as such, it was a collection of notes I had that with me, I looked through and I read it for the first time before I just wrote it, I never read it and I said wow wow I knew it wasn't a book yet, and then I put it aside, and the next day I bought a notepad a yellow notepad in a shop, and then I sat down again next morning and an enormous energy stream came through and I wrote what is enlightenment and I knew these lines were written, that was the book and enormous power came through, nobody ever disturbed me because he was a hermit after a few weeks I left him and somebody else

invited me I didn't know that before, and she was also a total hermit no social life, no visitors no phone calls, I was totally undisturbed, life put me from there to there and every morning for four hours, five hours the flow would come, occasionally things that I had written were referred to, but also a lot of new things, there was a powerful energy stream that lasted three months then I had to travel back to England and after the jet lag, got out my notepad to write more I stayed in a commune then, because I didn't have a home anymore nothing happened, couldn't write nothing is coming through all I could do was a little bit of editing, when I got a new visa went back to the west coast immediately the flow started then I realized life had to take me away from there because the energy field was not right for the book to come out I asked for it at the beginning so there was nothing to complain and then you have to one more time it happened I had to leave, get my visa renewed, back to the west England, it didn't happen I love England, England something within me resonates deeply with this piece of the English countryside and the emanation of that and yet the book couldn't come there it needed the more dynamic energy field, the more open, dynamic with less burden by the past of the west coast and that's where it happened so life I became a channel for the purpose of life to come through me, so it wasn't so much as me wanting this particular thing but suddenly having the vision of this would be, but without knowing how and this tends to happen when you leave egoic goals when you no longer believe that something that you might achieve out there will make you happy I never thought that that would make me happy but I felt there is more that is possible I'm open do what you want I was talking to myself because I am life as are you and after that everything fell into place always the book was written it was published without ever needing to look for anybody to publish it and very quickly two years after it came out I found that old sheet of paper in my luggage and I looked at it and saw it's all come to pass every little thing that it says here has already happened and more and more millions of people undergoing an inner shift and that was the vision, so it was not so much a wanting a particular outcome but realising this is it and then it comes now you ask why and always every new situation, if I had believed that the new situation would make me happy fulfill me I would have been disappointed because I had no idea when you become well known how many limitations there's, new limitations this brings up in your life it's not that great on the level of form so and the demands that are made upon one's time but the innumerable demands, all worthy requests demands bombarded with I had asked for it but no longer being able to have one on one contact when there are groups, it was so wonderful when there were ten people there was a one when two thousand people come to a talk I have to be ushered in and ushered out because otherwise I can't get out of there for two or three hours it creates a separation new limitations come in I had, that's, if I had thought this new thing would make me happy I would have preferred oh no, that wasn't it and that, so it doesn't depend it needs to, yes there is more that you can do you know that and all that is required is for you to be open, say there's more, use me and then see what comes but remain the essence is to remain rooted not to lose the present so that you are rooted that you do not come from a state of dissatisfaction and create out of a state of

dissatisfaction, which you could do you're not quite as powerfully, but you could say ok, I've got to create it won't make you happy and perhaps not anybody else either, so there is the egoic creation, which is you can try out it works up to a point and there is the creation when life creates through you, and all you need is the openness for that ready to be used and don't complain later when we find many new limitations because no matter where you go on the level of form you will find new limitations and once you know that, it actually doesn't matter that much but if you expect it liberation through some new life situation that's not going to happen the liberation is already now from form, the liberation so that you are not dependent on form and on outcome internally then it's much more only then can life work through you if you are dependent on some form that arises if you are not happy where you live now you have to be first get through the resistance now, if you are living in a tiny place or wherever, and you are not for some people it's a life situation for some people it's where they live or work they do, whatever it is this comes to purpose what is my purpose here it goes back to that what is my purpose here and this purpose is twofold two dimensions, that corresponds to the twofold nature that you are formed and formless your primary purpose is in the previous question the earlier question I called commitment the primary purpose is your commitment to the now to be true to life by being true to this moment that's primary purpose there's nothing to do with anything else it's your commitment to life and then no unhappiness is generated this is what is it's an uncompromising yes to this moment so you are committed to the formless one life that can only be accessed if you accept the forms of this moment and that needs to be uncompromising your commitment to life, now this is your primary purpose, no matter what happens on the level of form primary purpose comes first commitment to that the rest is, the next is secondary but also you can apply purpose to that now, having fulfilled or rather fulfilling the purpose of my life at this moment and every moment the only moment there is fulfilling, having committed myself to this, being a permanent commitment to now then you can look and see what is the secondary purpose of my life and that operates on the level of form, now that's the mistake that people make, is they look to the secondary and think it's primary the primary it is quite possible that in some way the secondary may not even function for you anymore you may only have a few more weeks to live you may have some other limitation like being in prison there isn't much that you can do on the secondary, there may be something perhaps you can talk to other prisoners and tell them about the present moment so primary comes first and primary works even if you only have one hour to live now you've fulfilled the primary purpose of your life, surrender to now good enough, your life is fulfilled, but as long as you have time, and some of us still have some time there also comes the secondary purpose of your life what do I do on the level of form now the more you are rooted in the formless which is primordial intelligence itself the more likely it is that you will know either as an insight as happened to me it may only be partial knowledge because I didn't know why I had to move England I had very partial knowledge but I know what I had to do without knowing why that's a kind of knowing too, sometimes you only know a bit but it comes as a realization, it doesn't

come through decision making process which is the mind you suddenly know what it is that you have to do and that is much more likely to come when you fulfill the primary purpose of your life, because you are connected with the non-conceptual, unconditioned intelligence of life itself, and then you will know what life wants from you the so-called you in this form and that can come either as a realization and then you have to obey it, you have to, you can't say well I have this strong impulse to move to the west coast of North America but I hardly know anybody there and I haven't got that much money, and what do I do, I have to give up my home it doesn't make sense and fear comes in oh I can't do that I didn't have much to lose fortunately, I didn't have a career or pension plan, so it was easier so that it comes, but make sure it comes from the deeper level it comes out of the peace it doesn't come out of an emotion that says oh, now I have to do that see there is a power and a peace that comes with that when you know what it is that you have to do it's a peaceful but powerful knowing, it is not a turbulent knowing, that's an emotion created thought and I wouldn't necessarily do what that wants you to do or if you are in doubt wait a little, become present again go within, and then you'll know if it stays, then you'll know it's right, if it's only a passing thing then the next day you suddenly have a different emotion so it may come as a realization, it may also come as an external event that you don't know why just the right person or event person comes into your life or event happens that corresponds to your purpose on the outer level of form and that is sometimes called coincidence or whatever word you have for that, and you can't explain and many people have told me miraculous events and happenings, how is it that I met this out of millions of people I met the one person who actually fit it into opened this door for me but it works many many times I've seen it so if it doesn't come from within it comes as an outer event or a person or it can come as something that at first sight looks negative, it can come as a loss if you said I'm here use me, be careful, it could come as a loss of something that you thought was your security was in reality holding you back and if you react with hostility if you react to what happens when that loss comes if it is loss for you, in some cases it is, loss often must precede the new if you then resist the loss and become negative about it, then you block the whole flow again the loss was life removing the obstacle for you and if you then complain about it and feel you are a victim of life, then you are creating a new obstacle, the obstacle that life removed for you you replace it with some thought that is complaining so be ready then for anything on the level of form even if it looks negative you will see when you accept it, how it quickly turns into positive and some people had to lose all their possessions before they could do the work they were meant to do on the level of form but that's not necessarily the case so you don't need to run away it is miraculous what happens when you are aligned with primary intelligence which is yourself but don't block it so what could block it is resistance when change does come into your life and it's not what you could have envisioned and your mind says that's not what I wanted well, your mind doesn't know enough to know what it is that you really need that's not what I wanted then you have to be uncompromising except it could be the end of a relationship it could be anything it may not necessarily be any kind of loss

or end you can't predict what form it takes but all we know is life begins to work for you when you are true to life which is known then life becomes cooperative most humans on the planet do not yet experience life as cooperative they experience life as hostile, it's a struggle it doesn't have to be like that life can be cooperative benevolent empowering but you have to contact life first find the life that you are first and only here can you find it than now so here we have primary purpose which applies no matter how old you are or what your life situation is that needs to be referred out of the primary purpose if you still have enough time comes secondary purpose to do with your life in form and it works beautifully don't judge when things happen accept what comes then change comes more quickly accept what comes with the acceptance life speeds up with non-acceptance, life is being held back accept whatever comes to you as the enlightened Roman emperor perhaps the only political leader who was ever enlightened Marcus Aurelius who lived 2000 years ago said accept whatever comes to you woven in the pattern of your destiny for what could more aptly fit your needs and there lies therein lies enormous power in the acceptance of whatever comes because when you do not accept what comes to you, you are saying no to life and the mind says I know better, I want something else accept whatever comes that is part of being true to life now then the power comes through the acceptance the non-rejection so that's primary then the secondary purpose unfolds with ease and there's no struggle now the fact that there's no struggle does not mean that there may not be an enormous output of energy sometimes when I say there's no struggle people think well it's going to mean there's going to be there can be high intensity of energy output such as happens here in our meetings and it's joyful such as happens if you should do writing there would be great intensity that flows into the writing but not struggle but intensity when the book was being written even my voice changed and became kind of more focused and people said what happened you have a different voice I said I don't know it's an energy stream that's coming through it's that's what's doing it so cooperate cooperate with life so that life becomes cooperative because what face you show to life will be the reflection you get if you don't cooperate welcoming to life whatever form life takes that is true to life then life cooperates with you it works beautifully so primary purpose secondary purpose and that applies to everyone except to those who are going to depart from this world of form shortly which could be anybody then primary purpose is enough for life to be fulfilled as long as you have time on the level of form secondary purpose will come in also there's the secret of human existence thank you now as you know tomorrow if there is such a thing only in the mind of course is echo adventure day and you may well ask what has echo adventure got to do with a spiritual retreat and I'm sure one or two minds have been complaining about that first of all you don't need to go on echo adventure you can stay here and be quiet just be still and walk around or sit and meditate nobody needs to go on the other hand you may find it enjoyable to go on an echo adventure and to bring so that the retreat is not separate from life so that you bring together normal living or echo adventure is not exactly normal but it's a little bit closer to normal than here so you bring your presence into that I don't know what you do you're going down the river on a

little boat and you have to be really present apparently what do they call it water something water rafting white water rafting something like that well that will keep you present our silence still applies until tomorrow morning so we remain in silence until tomorrow morning those of you who don't go on the echo adventure may want to be silent for the rest of the day tomorrow also if you're here you might as well be silent but that's an option one more thought has come in don't become impatient if your secondary purpose does not unfold immediately that would also block it stay true to life every moment that's enough the universe doesn't know much about time in the way that the human mind does don't become impatient because you would lose impatience means you've lost the present moment and one thing you can be sure of at this moment there's only one you are where you are meant to be that is always true at this moment you are where you are meant to be and then life unfolds if you remember that and know that continuously that at each moment the only one there is you are where you are meant to be this doesn't mean you're stuck in it at this moment you are where you are meant to be and if you know that if change is destined for you it will happen much more quickly you can never be anywhere else than where this is the best place for you to be right now and this makes true at this moment doesn't it it's not always obvious but it's always true

[Speaker 2] (8:58:18 - 8:59:28)

this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now

[Speaker 1] (9:00:07 - 9:30:10)

this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now this is the best place for you to be right now attention So this story is in the sense of And then what?!

If it doesn't It is not a good then story And of course The key to the story Is that And then what? That has no answer And nothing that follows it But you can also See in this story the desire of the disciple to have something tangible, in form, to carry away, to take away with him. He wrote this down for me and is not getting it.

Or tension, of course, it simply means presence. The light of presence or the space of presence in which yesterday's echo adventure, for those who went on an echo adventure, that light of presence or space of presence in which that appeared. The same light in which this room now appears.

Temporarily, the only thing that's timeless is the light in which things appear or the space in which things appear. The now, we call that the now sometimes. And you may have noticed the echo adventure is already receding.

It's receding. It's beginning to dissolve. As an actual experience, it has already dissolved.

Now it remains in that form has already dissolved. Now it remains as a thought form, perhaps until you die. And it may remain in your camera as a, on film is also a form or a digital, however that works, but I know that it's form too.

Don't know how exactly that works. And I know that that's not permanent either. Eventually the digital record will also go or the photo will turn yellow at the edges.

That's maybe after you die and then your children may still remember what that was and who that was. And then if the photo survives, which is, after a while, the photos, something happens to them and your grandchildren look at it and say that, I think that was my great-grandfather. And at some point they lose it and it gets into somebody else's hands.

And then they look at it and say, these are two people on a raft. And then maybe they find them in an antique store and then they've written down approximately 2004, somewhere in Latin America, maybe. Don't know exactly where, it looks tropical.

But nobody knows anymore who these forms are on sitting on the raft. Now, even if you had written a famous book or something and then people remembered, oh, that's that person who wrote that book, it doesn't help very much either because that doesn't survive that much longer either, maybe another few hundred years. And it's only a thought form.

It's beautiful to see how everything evaporates. The end of our gathering is not here yet. I'm not saying that.

But you can see it on the horizon. And then the whole experience of being here, it's suddenly it's a past, a thought form. And the essence is the space in which it appears.

And the more you contemplate how quickly things dissolve, the more you're rooted in that which is not subject to time. The still point at the center of it all, but it's not a point, the still space. All words are wrong, but just.

Needing an experience, which is a form that hasn't happened yet, or hanging on to something that's already disappearing, that's the normal way to live. Or fearing something that's coming. There's always the movement between hope or anticipation of an event.

And then there's the fear. If it's seen as something good, that's going to add something

to me, there's anticipation, oh, it's coming. And then you want to hang on, and you can't.

Or it's something that's perceived as some loss. Oh, the retreat is coming to an end. Then it's seen as something fearful.

And yet the essence of this retreat lies not in any experience that you have here. But in finding that which underlies all experience. So the echo adventure is not, no matter how much fun it was, is not the essence of this retreat.

Even the beautiful flowers and plant life are not the essence of this retreat. Even this room and the people in this room and the words that are being spoken are not the essence of this retreat. Because all these things are going to leave you or you are going to leave them.

And it's not the essence why we're here. So if that, if your mind clings to the outer form of this, which is the experience of the form of the retreat, then either you'll be happy that it's over because you go back to your own bed and nobody snores in your room except yourself, and that's okay. Or it's something that's just, it doesn't seem good because it's coming to an end and it was so nice.

But that's not it. To see the essence of this, why the very reason why we are here, of discovering that which underlies all experience. And now the presence yourself, the stillness within, in which it all appears and disappears.

And so this retreat you carry within. The essence of it is eternal because it's yourself. And then you enjoy the rest of your life, which isn't yours because you don't have one.

Going beyond form and identification with form, beyond ego. When you don't know the essence, then you're trapped in form and you identify with form, and that's ego. Your life purpose is the transcendence of that.

That's the primary purpose. And it can only be transcended at this moment. The beautiful discovery that thinking and emotions are only a tiny fraction and not who you are.

That there's a depth in you that goes beyond me, the person. A temporary form. Variously described by different teachings and teachers as eternal peace, the deathless realm, the timeless dimension of consciousness, Buddha nature, Christ within.

And now you can see the story of your so-called life, the so-called your life, from the perspective of the eternal. And from the perspective of that which is not touched by time in yourself, you can see and realize it doesn't matter that much what happens. You rise above dependency on what happens, and that's beautiful.

And even if you have to go back to a big city and don't see a single tree anymore when

you look out of the window, that's what is at that moment. And you can feel the essence of yourself as that in which that appears. Because within you, you carry the essence of all trees.

Because what is a tree other than a manifestation in form of the one life that you in essence are? The being that you are. So the tree, a temporary manifestation, beautiful.

All manifestations are ultimately beautiful because at their core lies the essence of all life. And that's why they're beautiful. Sometimes the beauty is not so apparent.

You have to look deeply to a concrete wall when you look out of your window, if you should live in a big city, and that's your view. You have to look deeply and allow it to be and find that even there, there's a beauty. But only, can only find that if you have found it within the essence of life within.

All the trees are an externalization of that. And even if you should never, if they should put you in prison and you should never go out into nature again, you are the divine nature out of which everything comes. So it is there in unmanifested, no form within you.

Life itself, to know yourself as life prior to form, timeless, still, present, formless, that's the liberation. The demand that the life of form should satisfy you can then be dropped because very often, the life of form seems to refuse to satisfy you. If you've lived for long enough and you don't need that long, then you can realize that, although some people never realize that the life of form does not have the ability to satisfy you and they carry on seeking.

And when they're 85 or 90, they still look in the jewelry window to see, that's a great ring, I'd love to have that to add to me or whatever it is. Not that you cannot appreciate beauty when you're 85 or 90, you can appreciate it deeply, but I'm sick to identify with a particular form and wanting to make it me and mine. Is seeking to be satisfied by the world of form.

And the more rings you accumulate, in this tiny example, the more fearful and unsatisfied you would feel. So the beautiful thing is to be able to drop the demand that the world of form should satisfy you. And you can only drop that, you cannot make yourself, okay, I shouldn't expect anything from the world of form, that doesn't work.

I shouldn't expect because it doesn't work, but it's only if you touch that. Sometimes the seeing is enough to touch that in you that does not need to be satisfied by the world of form because it is prior to the world of form, it is the being itself, the life itself. And sometimes for some people, it's enough to see how impermanent and passing and fleeting and ultimately unsatisfying everything in this world of form is, as long as you seek something there, only as long as you seek something there.

So for some people it's enough and they suddenly say, wow, it's all like dust and smoke

and I'm trying to hang on to something or make it mine. And they see suddenly the impermanence. For some people it's enough for somebody, so if it's one big loss or somebody close to them dying to see the whole thing in that one event of the unreliability, the fleetingness of all forms and it hits them once and that's enough and it awakens in them that which is beyond form.

And that's the liberation. The liberation from form is the liberation from the world because the world equals form. It's the world of form.

Not needing a particular configuration of forms in your life anymore. It doesn't mean that you cannot play. You're not condemned to a totally passive observer of the world of form from now on, but the observer is always there.

Even while you participate in the world of form, the observer remains no matter whether you are passive at this moment and simply sit there or stand there or walk there and watch and let it all be and see the beauty of it. Or whether you participate in the world of form and in the midst of activity and people around you are running this way and that when you're trying to build a house or build this or build that or create this or create that. And even while you're in action, not to lose yourself in the action because the action also is form.

The doing, people so easily lose yourself in the doing. The doing also is form. So see that you don't get lost.

You'd see how easy it is. The moment you start, okay, what do I need to do now? Even with little things and most of life consists of little things.

They're not that many big things. 99% of your life consists of little things. Even if you're a famous person, it still consists of little things.

After they acclaim you and you get a standing ovation, you go back home and drink a cup of tea. And then you say, okay, now here we are. Or a cup of tea is brought to you.

And then you miss out the beauty of making it, of putting on the kettle, the little movements. But it's still, it's little things. People wait for the big things.

They're rare and they're not that great either when they happen. The wedding. And of course the wedding is inseparable either from the divorce or the funeral.

The big trip that's coming. And then on the big trip, you always are where you are. You're sitting in airline and aircraft seat, looking out of the window.

And then you arrive in the hotel and then you move your body from here to there. But it's always just this moment. It's not, it's only an idea in the mind, the big trip.

The big trip consists of one little moment at a time. And that's again why there's

something people, the dissatisfaction, because there's always a clash between the mind forms that are generated by the egoic consciousness. It's the big trip coming and it's going to be great and it's going to fulfill me.

And when it comes, it consists of ordinary things. And the rafting, okay, that's so for a moment, you get that stimulus of ha ha ha. But you could have that all the time if you were present with every little thing, just that.

And then you don't depend it on fun anymore. Not that you can't have fun, but it means that every moment is fun because fun means you feel alive. If fun has any meaning, it's if you feel more alive and people make fun a goal in their lives because most of the time they don't feel the aliveness.

So they think, okay, where's the fun in my life? And there's no fun in my life. Then they're looking, I need a trip or whatever it is, another relationship, maybe that will bring some fun in.

And not realize what do they mean by fun? They want to feel more alive, I suppose. What else could it mean?

They want to feel the life that they are, the aliveness of themselves. And it's hard if you're looking on the level of form, you don't get it that often. And some people spend their whole life pursuing fun through drugs and then they go out and go listen to as loud music as they can.

It even affects your hearing after a few times. At least I feel a little bit alive here. Yeah.

And then always fly after a few hours, you have to walk out of the discotheque and then comes the, oh, you go down again. And then even worse, the emptiness, not the true emptiness, but the emptiness of what now? And where's the next thing?

And that worse thing after a while, fun. So many people feel they're missing out on life. And some people, no matter what age they are, 40, 50, 60, when is it all going to start?

Some people call it the big break. I'm not whenever I'm getting my big break, the big time. The big time is now.

Now, if you don't realize that the big time is now, you're never going to find it because when you think you have found it, it will turn out not to be it. So to all fun seekers, the fun is the aliveness of life is here in this moment and you know to get in there to find it, not away from it to find it. Get in here to find it.

And then you realize the very aliveness of yourself is the fun that you were looking for. And so does that mean I can't have fun anymore? No, you're having fun already.

Now, what does happen, of course, the dependency on experiences goes. So the almost

compulsive or addictive search for more experiences also goes. In that sense, you're no longer a fun seeker in the same way in which you are no longer a spiritual seeker when you leave here or now.

I hope nobody leaves here and continues to be a spiritual seeker because you don't want that. And if your identity has been that you're a spiritual seeker over the past 30 years, it's time to step out of that and be a finder and not a fun seeker either, but a fun finder at this very moment. And you may find, and some people have come to me concerned, they say things, we don't get fulfillment.

I don't get fulfillment anymore through the things that I used to enjoy so much. And that all they mean is the external stimulus, things don't stimulate them anymore to such an extent because they don't need them as stimulus. They're already alive now.

So then you can go into an experience that before was great, like a ride on a roller coaster. Now, why people love that? Because it forces them into intense presence and then they scream.

And then one person actually gave that as an example and said, I loved it so much. And the last time I just walked past it and watched the people and said, I didn't need that anymore. And he got worried.

He thought, I'm no longer, I can't have fun anymore. You can, or you may, or you may not go into the roller coaster but there's no need to be concerned when you walk past it and just leave it, let it be, let them scream because you don't need the stimulus anymore. But if you can enjoy it, why not enjoy that?

And that's the same with all experiences. Sex, the need for it, that's an enormous need, one of the great needs. Of course, it's built into the body.

The body is programmed to seek it because it wants to perpetuate itself. It wants to produce other bodies that's built into the very genes, it's nature. So it's nature for the body to seek that.

And that in itself is not problematic. As you know, when you observe animals, the sex that animals have is never problematic because they don't have an ego that gets in there and want something.